

HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA

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HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA

Written according to the Syllabus of West Bengal Council of
Higher Secondary Education and Indian School Certificate
for Classes XI-XII

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SYLLABUS IN HISTORY

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Modern India (1765—1950)

Chapter I : Bengal : 1765-1772

- (1) General Introduction—break-up of the Mughal empire.
- (2) Plassey to Buxar.
- (3) Diwani and Dual System.
- (4) Famine of 1770.

Chapter II : Administrative Reforms (law, justice, police included)

- (1) From Warren Hastings to Dalhousie : District Administration as pivot.
- (2) Civil Service—impact of Fort William College and Haileybury on training.
- (3) Employment of Indians up to Bentinck.

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- (1) Urbanization and growth of middle class.
- (2) Spread of Western education through English medium.
- (3) Challenge of Christianity and new learning.
- (4) Recovery of the past—Religious and Social : Reforms—Brahmo movement.
- (5) Beginning of a new literature.
- (6) Beginning of the Press.
- (7) Development of transport and communication.
- (8) Beginning of political consciousness and political associations.

Chapter IV : Growth of an Indian Empire

- (1) Rise and fall of Mysore.
- (2) Revival and disintegration of Maratha Empire.
- (3) Nepal and Burma Wars.
- (4) Rise and fall of Sikh Power.
- (5) Conquest of Sind.
- (6) Annexations of Dalhousie.
- (7) From Subsidiary Alliance to Paramountcy—effects on Indian States.

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- (1) Early risings.
- (2) Muslim reaction—Wahabi and Faraizi Movement.
- (3) Revolt of 1857.

Chapter VI : Evolution of a Framework of British rule at Home and in India.

- (1) Constitutional changes from 1858 to 1919.
- (2) Local Self-Government.
- (3) Struggle for Indianisation of public services.
- (4) Economic policy—railways, irrigation and development of modern industry ; taxes, tariffs and currency policy ; tenancy laws and famine measures.
- (5) Nationalist protest against “un-British rule”.

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- (1) N. W. F. and Afghanistan.
- (2) Burma.
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Chapter VIII : Cultural and Religious Revival

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- (2) Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Aligarh movement.

- (3) Literature of Protest and Patriotism—Bankim to Rabindranath.
- (4) Birth of Oriental Art.
- (5) Development of press and public opinion—Vernacular Press Act and after.
- (6) Religious movements—beginning of militant nationalism.

Chapter IX : British Policy of Divide and Rule

- (1) Partition of Bengal.
- (2) Swadeshi movement.
- (3) Terrorism.
- (4) Birth of Muslim League.
- (5) Separate electorate.

Chapter X : Towards Freedom

- (1) Non-violent non-co-operation, Khilafat, Civil Disobedience movement.
- (2) Terrorism ; Peasants' and Workers' movement.
- (3) Government of India Act, 1935.
- (4) Growth of Communalism to Pakistan Resolution.
- (5) India and the Second World War ; Cripps Mission.
- (6) Quit India Movement.
- (7) Subhas Chandra Bose and I. N. A.
- (8) Cabinet Mission, Independence and partition.

Chapter XI : Consolidation of Independence

- (1) Framing of Constitution.
- (2) Integration of Indian States.

(Three topics, 'Changes in the Constitutions of the Company's Home and Indian Governments', 'Administrative Reforms', and 'Economic Planning', which were included in the original Syllabus, have now been deleted).

History of Modern India

CHAPTER I

BENGAL : 1765-1772

Fall of the Mughal Empire: Towards the close of Aurangzib's reign, the Mughal Empire extended from Ghazni in the north-west to Chittagong in the south-east, and from Kashmir in the north to Karnatak in the south. This vast empire was divided into 21 Subahs or provinces. The land revenues amounted to Rs. 33 crores and 65 lakhs of rupees. Such a vast empire could hardly be ruled effectively by one Emperor or from a single political centre. To this basic weakness was added Aurangzib's wrong policy. The Rajputs, the Jats and the Sikhs rose up in arms as a result of his religious intolerance. The long-drawn-out war against the Marathas in the Deccan weakened the Empire. An empty treasury failed to provide the soldiers' pay. The jagirdari system was on the verge of collapse. There was a break-up of the administrative machinery in many areas of central and north India. Staying in the far distant Deccan, Aurangzib failed to check the spread of chaos in the far-flung provinces. The very basis of the justification for the existence of the Mughal empire—keeping peace and order in this vast country—was thoroughly undermined. The fifty-year span of Aurangzib's harsh rule ended in total failure. Broken in heart, he breathed his last in 1707 while chaos, rebellion and calamity were raging all round.

The death of Aurangzib was followed by the usual Mughal practice of in-fighting among his sons for the imperial throne. Emerging victorious from the contest, Shah Alam Bahadur Shah ruled for five years (1707-12). His successors were one and all weak and unfit to rule. They were mere puppets.

in the hands of their ministers. Even if the Emperor lacks the ability to govern, competent and loyal ministers can help preserve the empire. But the ministers of the 18th century Mughal Emperors were more devoted to their personal interests than to the well-being of the empire. The court nobles ranged in groups and jockeyed for power and position.

The Mughal Empire thus fell to pieces due to the centre's weakness. Nizam-ul-mulk in South India, Saadat Khan in Oudh and Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal laid the foundations of independent kingdoms. At first they were provincial rulers under the Emperors; later on they began to rule practically independently, with only nominal allegiance to the Emperors. The Rajput rulers became independent all but in name. The Marathas became independent and extended their sway to Gujrat and Malwa. Kabul, a Subah of the Empire, fell into the hands of Nadir Shah, the ruler of Persia, and then into those of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Sikhs made themselves masters of the Punjab.

Another cause of the weakness of the Mughal Empire was foreign invasion. During the reign of Muhammad Shah, Nadir Shah captured Delhi and put to death near about one hundred and fifty thousand of its inhabitants (1739). The helpless Emperor had to cede Kabul and the areas bordering the Indus to him. Nadir Shah returned to his kingdom carrying off an enormous booty in the shape of nearly 80 crores of rupees, the Peacock Throne and the Koh-i-nur of Shah Jahan as also other valuables. After his death, Ahmad Shah Abdali became the ruler of Afghanistan and invaded India again and again. The powerful Marathas had to concede victory to him in the third battle of Panipat (1761). He occupied the Punjab and Kashmir. It was during his reign that the Sikhs laid the basis of their mastery over the Punjab.

The first independent Nawab of Bengal was Murshid Quli Khan. Under the Mughals, the capital of Bengal was Dacca; this was transferred to Murshidabad by Murshid Quli Khan.

He was succeeded in 1727 by his son-in-law, Shuja-ud-din. After his death, his son Sarfaraz Khan was defeated and killed by Alivardi Khan, who now stepped in the throne (1740). At first he had Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under his control. Later Alivardi had to cede Orissa to the Maratha Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur following repeated invasions by him. These Maratha invasions are remembered in Bengal as the 'Bargi troubles' because the Maratha soldiers were generally indicated by the word 'Bargir'.

The English Company : On 31 December, 1600, Queen Elizabeth I of England issued a charter to a Company formed by 218 English merchants to carry on trade in the East. This body of merchants is usually known in history as the 'East India Company'. During the 17th and upto the first half of the 18th century the Kings of England issued fresh charters to the Company on various terms. Later, this right to issue charters was taken over by Parliament.

Apart from the royal charters the Company also assumed various rights and privileges at different times at different places under orders from their authorities in England. Thus, in 1639, the Company secured lease of land at Madras from the Raja of Chandragiri and built Fort St. George as the new English commercial centre. In the 17th century, the Company set up factories at Harihar-pore and Balasore in Orissa, Hooghly and Kasimbazar in West Bengal and Patna in Bihar. In 1690, Job Charnock laid, on behalf of the Company, the foundations of Calcutta at a village called Sutanuti on the bank of the Ganges. In 1698, the Company established a settlement in the three villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata and Gobindpur and built Fort William. This was named after the then English King, William III. In 1700, Calcutta also became a Presidency (Presidency of Fort William in Bengal) like Madras and Bombay. Each Presidency contained some factories; these were under the

control of a 'Council' with a 'President' and several members. Later on, the 'President' came to be known as the 'Governor'.

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh-siyar, an embassy of the Company led by John Surman reached Delhi with a view to securing commercial privileges. In 1717, a *farman* (order, grant) from the Emperor allowed the Company to carry on trade in Bengal, South India and West India on very favourable terms. The Company secured the privilege of trading in Bengal on payment of Rs. 3,000 per annum in lieu of all duties. This *farman* became the pivot of all commercial activities of the Company.

During the reigns of Murshid Quli Khan, Shuja-ud-din and Alivardi Khan, the Company gradually extended its trade and influence. Differences arose between the Nawabs and the English regarding the interpretation of Farrukh-siyar's *farman*. The Nawabs aimed at keeping a check on the Company's power so as to preserve their own authority intact. This policy resulted in a head-on clash between Alivardi's successor, Siraj-ud-daula, and the Company.

In the 17th century, the French also arrived to trade in India. Their main base was at Pondichery, their chief factory in Bengal being at Chandernagar. The French were the commercial rivals of the English. This rivalry led to political and military clashes during the mid-18th century. This was directly linked with two protracted wars between England and France in Europe (the War of Austrian Succession, 1740-1748, and the Seven Years' War, 1756-63). The main arena of contest between the French and the English in India was Karnatak; the struggle spread also to Bengal.

Battle of Plassey (1757): The Second Anglo-French War in Karnatak ended in 1754 with the French dominant at Hyderabad and the English on the eastern coast (several areas in Tamil Nadu-Andhra Pradesh). Fresh fighting

began in 1756, the year in which Siraj-ud-daula became Nawab of Bengal. With the beginning of his disputes with the English, he began to lean towards the French. The English and the French backed different contenders for the throne after Alivardi's death. The old Nawab had been apprehensive that after his death the opponents of Siraj, whom he had nominated to succeed him, would seek the help of foreigners. This proved only too true. Ghasiti Begam, the maternal aunt of Siraj, and Rajballabh, her counsellor, made contacts with the English against the new Nawab. Later, such prominent members of Siraj's court as Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh, Yar Latif and Jagat Seth became displeased with him for various reasons and conspired with the English Company to have him replaced on the throne by Mir Jafar. Robert Clive established an understanding with the conspirators on behalf of the Company. He had already become well-known for his successful role in the Karnatak War.

Siraj's conflict with the English had three phases. Even before Alivardi's death the English had ignored his orders and begun repairs to the fort in Calcutta on the pretext that they were at war with the French. On becoming Nawab, Siraj directed them to demolish the newly built portions of the Fort, only to be defied again. Moreover, there was an added provocation in the shape of allowing Krishnaballabh, the son of Rajballabh, to take refuge in Calcutta, so as to escape the Nawab's investigation into certain charges. Siraj thereupon attacked Calcutta and captured it (June, 1756). He had won the first round. But he met with reverse in the next phase. Clive arrived from Madras and won back Calcutta. By a treaty Siraj had to concede to the Company the right to build fortifications and issue currency (February, 1757). Thereafter, the conspiracy hatched by Mir Jafar and others with Clive came to a head at the battle of Plassey (23 June, 1757). This was the third and the last phase. The unfortunate Nawab fled but was captured and put to death under the order of Miran, the son of Mir Jafar.

From the purely military point of view the battle of Plassey was hardly more than a skirmish. Clive's victory was due primarily to the treachery of Mir Jafar while the battle was in progress. From the political point of view, however, this battle ranks with the greatest battles in the history of the world. It paved the way for the establishment of British rule in Bengal, and eventually in the whole of India. The sceptre was seized by the English merchants through the use of diplomacy and arms.

Plassey to Buxar (1757-1764) : The battle of Plassey did not lead to direct English rule in Bengal. As agreed to previously, Mir Jafar became the Nawab. But he was entirely dependent on the English; he did not have the power to rule independently as did Alivardi and Siraj. He gave large sums of money to the Company's officers, a jagir to Clive, and zamindari rights to the Company in respect of the district of 24-Parganas. He depended upon the Company's support in his disputes with powerful officials such as Rai Durlabh and Ram Narayan. He needed the assistance of the Company's troops for the suppression of revolts at Dacca and Purnea. When Shah Alam II, the nominal Emperor of Delhi, invaded Bengal, it was Clive who repulsed him. Clive also defeated the Dutch in the battle of Bidera (1759). The English suspected that Mir Jafar, being impatient of their control, had intrigued with the Dutch against them.

Under Mir Jafar began the age of puppet Nawabs in Bengal. The officers of the Company became the real power behind throne. They controlled the military and economic levers. They marshalled the resources of Bengal and won the war against the French in the Deccan (the treaty of Paris, 1763). The French lost any chance they had of winning an empire in India. The conflict with Mir Qasim gave the English the opportunity to extend their influence to Oudh.

Mir Jafar could not retain the throne for more than three years. The English removed him and made his son-in-law, Mir Qasim, the new Nawab, and in return were assigned zamindari rights in the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong (1760). But he was not prepared to obey the English as

supinely as did Mir Jafar. As Murshidabad was not very far from Calcutta and hence was under strong English influence, he shifted his capital to Monghyr in Bihar. To augment his power, he introduced various administrative reforms and strengthened the army. At last he came into open conflict with the English when he tried to control the inland trade in the interest of his subjects by talking up the thorny question of duties. The officers of the Company earned enormous profits by carrying on duty-free trade in an illegal manner. The Nawab lost revenues and the Indian traders suffered by unfair competition. In actual fact, the English were becoming so dominant in Bengal militarily, politically and economically that it was next to impossible for a Nawab to rule independently. This great change became apparent within a few years of the battle of Plassey. Mir Qasim's attempt to restore the Nawab's authority could not be tolerated by them.

When the conflict with Mir Qasim began (1763), the English lost no time in deposing him and re-installing Mir Jafar on the throne. After meeting reverses in three engagements one after another (at Katwa, Gheria and Udhuanala) Mir Qasim sought the help of Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab of Oudh. Shuja was not only an independent ruler ; as the *wazir* or prime minister of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, he occupied an important place in the imperial hierarchy. However, neither the Emperor nor his *wazir* had any real power. Shah Alam dared not rule in Delhi and preferred to live under the protective care of his *wazir*. Anyway, Shuja-ud-daula and Shah Alam moved jointly in aid of Mir Qasim but were defeated by the English general, Munro, at the battle of Buxar (22 October, 1764). Mir Qasim fled, and after much suffering, died. Shuja-ud-daula left Oudh and crossed over to the adjacent Rohilla country.

The process of momentous political changes ushered in by Plassey had its culmination at Buxar. The fall of Mir Qasim ended the possibility of any further challenge to the English on the part of the Nawabs of Bengal. The ascendancy of the British in Bengal was now beyond dispute. The Company also extended

its political influence in North India. Shuja-ud-daula got back Oudh by the treaty of Allahabad (1765), but he had to pay Rs. 50 lakhs in cash as indemnity and to surrender Kora and Allahabad. Within a few years, he was reduced to the status of one of the dependent allies of the Company. The Company did not bring Allahabad and Kora under its direct rule but instead handed these over to Shah Alam who began to reside at Allahabad under the protection of the English. The Company became the dominant power in the Bengal-Bihar-Allahabad-Oudh region.

Dewani (1765): Clive was the chief officer or "Governor" of the Company in Bengal during the first term of Mir Jafar as Nawab. He returned to England in 1760. After the battle of Buxar he came back to Bengal as Governor (1765). He was now faced with certain political and administrative problems. By the treaty of Allahabad, he defined the relations between the Company and the Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh. It was also felt necessary to re-adjust the relations between the Company and the Nawab of Bengal. Mir Jafar had already died (1765) and the Company had placed his son, Najm-ud-daula, on the throne. A new treaty had been made with him before Clive's arrival (1765). Militarily, the Nawab was made to depend on the Company. A minister nominated by the English, Muhammad Reza Khan, was appointed to look after the administration on behalf of the Nawab. This arrangement made the English the real power in respect of all military and administrative matters. The Nawab was reduced to the status of a pensioner of the Company.

Clive was aware that though the Company enjoyed effective power, this had no legal sanction behind it. Though the Nawabs of Bengal had begun to rule more or less independently from the second decade of the 18th century, from the constitutional point of view they were mere provincial heads appointed by the Mughal Emperor and strictly subordinate to him. Thus the

Nawab had no legal right to vest the Company with administrative powers in Bengal. Though Shah Alam had no real power, he still enjoyed considerable prestige as the repository and continuator of the

regal Mughal tradition. As the lawful successor of Akbar and Aurangzib, he was still widely regarded as the legitimate ruler of India, without whose sanction nobody could administer any part of the country. From this point of view the power exercised by the Company in Bengal had no legal validity, since the Emperor had not vested the Company with any such right. Though the Indian rulers or the nobility of the time had not raised any such question of law, Clive was apprehensive that the European rivals of the English in India—the French and the Dutch—could raise awkward questions regarding the English Company's illegal operations in Bengal. This would affect the conduct of British foreign policy in the continent of Europe.

To resolve this problem, Clive secured from Shah Alam a *farman* granting to the Company the *Dewani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (12 August, 1765). The Nawab continued to discharge the *Nizamat* functions. The Company agreed to pay Rs. 26 lakhs to the Emperor annually from the revenues of Bengal. The Emperor retained possession of Allahabad and Kora.

Under the Mughal system, each Subah (province) was ruled by two high officials. The *Subahdar* or *Nazim* was in charge of the army and maintenance of law and order. He also carried on day-to-day administration and tried criminal cases. The *Dewani* was in charge of revenues and also tried civil cases. Both were appointed by the Emperor and were directly responsible to him. Such dual administration was considered necessary to minimise the risk of revolt in the provinces. Both the *Subahdar* and the *Dewan* had to depend on each other and none could enjoy absolute power and hence be in a position to defy the Emperor. But with the weakening of the central authority after the death of Aurangzib, this system could no longer operate. The Nawabs of Bengal from Murshid Quli Khan nominated the *Dewans* and were thus in absolute control of both *Dewani* and *Nizamat* functions.

Shah Alam's *farman* formally restored the Mughal system of dual administration in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Collection of revenue and administration of civil justice came under the control of the Company as *Dewan* while police, general administration and criminal justice rested with the Nawab as *Nazim*. This is known in history as *Double Government*. In actual practice, this assumed a strange form. Clive did not arrange for the officers of the Company to look after revenue collection and civil justice directly. Two deputy Nawabs (*Naib Subah*)—Muhammad Reza Khan in Bengal and Shitab Rai in Bihar—were nominated by the Company to do the job. The officers of the Company kept watch over the collection of revenue and transfer of funds from the Nawab's treasury to the Company's treasury. The Nawab also lost his control over *Nizamat* functions. In terms of the Company's treaty with Najm-ud-daula (1765), the two deputy Nawabs nominated by the Company actually carried on the general administration on behalf of the Nawab. It was arranged to pay the Nawab Rs. 53 lakhs annually towards his personal expenses.

This so-called Double Government made for a divorce between power and responsibility. The Company pulled the strings in respect of both *Dewani* and *Nizamat* functions. The nominees of the Company—Reza Khan and Shitab Rai—collected revenue and carried on administration in the interest of the Company and under its instructions. The Company did not directly assume responsibility for governing the country. The Nawab was in charge of *Nizamat* functions in name only; the actual power was no longer exercised by him. Clive was content to control the levers of power, but did not think that the Company had any moral obligation to look after the welfare of the subjects. The English 'sucked the orange dry', leaving the peelings on the table.

The dyarchy or Double Government had another remarkable feature. Though the Company (Governor and Council) had the authority, it did not arrange for collection of revenue

and running the administration by its own officers. All such work was entrusted to Indian employees of Reza Khan and Shitab Rai. This was mainly due to the Company's unwillingness to assume direct responsibility for anything. However, even if the Company had the will, in actual practice it could not have got the work done by its English officers. They had been appointed to look after the commercial interests of the Company and had no previous experience of exercising administrative functions. They were given the direct charge of collecting revenue and administering civil justice only in the four 'ceded districts' of 24-Parganas, Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong which the Company had received from Mir Jafar and Mir Qasim.

Clive's system prevailed only for a few years (1765-72). During this period, the Company had two Governors in Bengal—Verelst (1767-69) and Cartier (1769-72). The instructions from the Governor and the Council were passed on to Reza Khan through the English Resident at the Nawab's Durbar. Reza Khan carried on his *Dewani* and *Nizamat* functions accordingly. The armed forces were under the absolute control of the English; the Nawab had only his body-guard to depend upon.

Double
Government in
practice

The *Amils* or revenue-collectors under Reza Khan had to pay a fixed sum for the districts put in their charge; the surplus they were to keep for themselves. Naturally they fleeced the people as much as they could so as to collect as big a surplus as possible. They only aimed at maximizing the revenue collection with a view to becoming rich in the quickest possible time. They had no certainty as to how long they would be allowed to hold their posts; the term could be as short as only a year. They had 'no connection or natural interest in the welfare of the country where they made the collections'. Such a system led inevitably to only one result. An experienced official of the Company wrote in 1769: '...since the succession of the Company to the *Dewani* the condition of the people of this country has been worse:

than it was before...this fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards its ruin'.

As a remedial measure Verelst appointed some high English officials, called 'Supervisors', to prevent oppression and malpractices in the collection of revenue. But this system led to fresh abuses, such as the Supervisors' efforts to extend their private trade through abuse of their administrative authority. Neither the Directors of the Company nor the Governor and Council in Calcutta tried to evolve a rational system of administration.

Famine of 1770 : In 1770, during Cartier's administration, there was a terrible famine in Bengal. As the year was 1176 according to the Bengali calendar, Bengal remembers it as the 'Famine of 1176'. Bankimchandra, the great Bengali novelist, has drawn an extremely tragic picture of it in his *Anandamath*; there was, however, no exaggeration in it. In 1772, the Governor and Council reported to the Court of Directors in London that the peasants had sold their cattle and implements of cultivation and consumed the seeds themselves. They sold their children till there were no buyers. They then began to eat leaves and grass. In June 1770, the English Resident at the Nawab's *Durbar* at Murshidabad had to admit that the living were feeding on the dead; that Murshidabad became a prey to small-pox on such a scale that decomposed dead bodies lay strewn all around. Jackals and dogs could not dispose of the immense number. Almost a third of the population of Bengal was wiped out. The province turned into a land of eerie silence, bereft of the hurry and bustle of life.

The direct cause of the famine was failure of the rains. However, the Company's system of power without responsibility and the corrupt practices of its officers turned it into a great human tragedy. Even when the people were in extreme distress, there was no relaxation of the harsh policy of revenue collection. In 1770 there was a remission of 5 per cent, but next year this was more than made up with an extra levy of 10 per cent. The total revenue collection in 1771 exceeded that of 1768,

A paltry sum of £ 9,000 was sanctioned officially for the relief of a famine-stricken population of 30 millions. The officers of the Company took to lucrative trade—selling rice at prices far more than they paid to buy the same. They did not hesitate to look for private gains amidst the terrible sight of great misery all around. The Supervisors having arranged to build up sufficient stocks of food grains in their own districts, the deficit areas felt the weight of the famine all the more.

The famine led to disastrous results in the social and economic life of Bengal. One-third of the cultivable land lay fallow because there were not sufficient cultivators. The income of the zamindars fell due to fall in the number of ryots. Two-thirds of old zamindars faced ruin. The toll among the poor engaged in cottage industries was so great that the village economy collapsed. The Company's income from both revenue-collection and commerce fell and it had a financial crisis in 1772. It was then felt that the British Parliament should step into the picture and thus was the Regulating Act of 1773 passed with a view to establishing the control of Parliament as also of the English King's Ministers over the Company's affairs.

This Act introduced far-reaching reforms in the Company's administration. The Court of Directors had already been feeling the necessity of making drastic changes in this regard. The 'masked system' of administration introduced by Clive—the system in which the actual power of the Company was 'masked' by the nominal authority of the Nawab—was thoroughly exposed as the evil it was when famine raged. The Court of Directors decided that the 'mask' should henceforth be abandoned and the Company would stand forth as *Dewan* openly. Warren Hastings was appointed Governor of Bengal to translate this new policy into action. He abolished the Double Government in 1772. Thus the Famine of 1770 led to a fundamental change in the system of British government in Bengal.

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS UNDER THE COMPANY

Legislation : Before the Company took over the *Dewani*, it could legislate in respect of areas occupied by it (e.g., Calcutta and the zamindari lands). The Company derived this right from different charters from the time of Elizabeth I onwards. At first, this right vested in the Court of Directors ; the Charter Act of 1726 gave this right to the Presidents and Councils of Madras, Bombay and Bengal.

When the Company took over the *Dewani* directly, the responsibility for legislating for the whole of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa for civil cases fell on the Governor of Bengal and his Council. In 1772, Warren Hastings issued 37 Regulations for the administration of justice—civil and criminal.

The sovereign power of legislation for the Company's Indian territories lay with the British Parliament, but it was necessary in the interest of administration that the authorities in India should have the right to legislate. The

Regulating Act (1773) passed by the British Parliament provided that the Governor-General of Bengal and his Council should prepare 'rules, ordinances and regulations' for the good administration of the Bengal Presidency ; these were to be 'registered and published' by the Supreme Court, copies being sent to a Minister in England. This provision ensured that no law could be valid without the Supreme Court's approval and that the British Cabinet reserved the right to repeal, in the name of the King, any law it did not approve. In order to bypass the Supreme Court's authority, the Governor-General and his Council took recourse to not sending to the Supreme Court laws applicable to areas outside Calcutta. In 1789, an Act of Parliament approved this course. Most of the legislative measures taken by the Governor-General and his Council till 1833 were not submitted to the Supreme Court.

These were brought together in the form of a code for circulation and translated in local languages.

The powers of the Governor-General and his Council in regard to legislation were not applicable to the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. There the Governor and his Council legislated in terms of the royal charter of 1726. Later, Parliament granted this right of legislation to the Governor and his council in Madras and Bombay by the Acts of 1799 and 1807. It was provided that in both Presidencies all such laws should be registered with the principal court (Supreme Court in Madras ; Recorder's Court—later, the Supreme Court—in Bombay).

Madras and
Bombay

In the three Presidencies, three different authorities made laws as they thought fit. There was no provision for co-ordinating such legislative measures, for Madras and Bombay were not bound by the instructions or supervision of Bengal in matters of legislation. This gave rise to various difficulties. Moreover, there was a fundamental drawback in such an arrangement. The Governor-General, the Governors and the members of the Councils were not well versed in law and did not have the requisite experience in law-making. Thus, their legislative measures frequently contained defects which created complexities for the judiciary and the administration.

Defects in sys-
tem of legislation

Another cause which added to complexities in trying cases was the application of disparate systems of law. In certain cases, particularly in regard to cases before the Supreme Court, English law was applied. In regard to disputes relating to succession, marriage etc. which had roots in social customs, Hindu law was applicable to the Hindus and Islamic law to the Muslims. Criminal cases were tried according to the Islamic law. The legislative measures taken by the Governor-General (or Governor) and the Councils added to the confusion. There was no co-ordination between the King's Court (Supreme Court) and the Company's Courts.

Defects in
judicial system

The entire judicial system thus resembled a cumbrous piece of machinery.

It was, therefore, imperative that something should be done to remove the defects in the system of legislation. The Charter Act of 1833 gave the Europeans the right to 'free ingress' in India and to settle there. The Ingress of Europeans political circles in England were apprehensive that the inflow of a greater number of Europeans into India might make their relations with the Indians more complex than before and give rise to racial conflicts. Three disparate sets of laws in force in the three Presidencies would only complicate matters in such an eventuality. It was, therefore, felt necessary to centralise the powers of legislation by vesting such rights in a single authority.

The Charter Act of 1833 introduced three important reforms. The Governor and the Council in Madras and Bombay lost all powers of legislation. The Governor-General of *Bengal* became the Governor-General of *India*, and he—along with his Council—was vested with the sole responsibility of legislation for the whole of British India. Provincial autonomy was totally abolished in regard to legislation. Secondly, in order that the Governor-General and his Council could adequately shoulder this grave responsibility provision was made for the appointment of a 'Fourth Ordinary Member' to the Council. He was to be appointed by the Court of Directors after approval by the King (*i.e.*, the Cabinet) and not to be selected from the Company's officers. His duties were to be limited to matters respecting legislation. He was not to participate in the proceedings of the Council, or to cast any vote, in respect of any other matter. This provision was made so that the Governor-General and his Council could have the necessary expertise in legal matters. The authorities intended to appoint to this new post a legal expert from England. Accordingly, Thomas Babington Macaulay was the first appointee. The holder of this post was usually

known as the 'Law Member'. In later times, several other legal luminaries occupied the post.

Under the Regulating Act, the Governor-General and Council could not make laws or 'Acts' in the fullest sense of the term; their 'rules, ordinances and regulations' were a grade below full-fledged laws or acts. The Charter Act of 1833 gave them the power to legislate in the real sense. So long their 'rules' or 'ordinances' were known as 'regulations'; the Charter made them 'Acts'. Excepting a few reserved subjects (*e.g.*, the privileges of the King and of Parliament, the Company's organisational structure, keeping the army in order), the Governor-General and Council were empowered to undertake legislation applicable to all classes in all the Company's territories. Of course, the sovereign power of legislation on any matter concerning British India rested with Parliament; but this power was not exercised except in very important cases. The system of registration and publication by the Supreme Court of laws made by the Governor-General and Council was abolished. However, the Court of Directors was authorised to reject any Act, if considered necessary.

Further improvements in the system of legislation were made twenty years later by the Charter Act of 1853. The 'Law Member' was permitted to take part in the work of the Council in all matters and also vote accordingly, though the special responsibility for legislation still lay with him. Frequently, the Governor-General's Council did not include any member having any particular experience of administrative affairs in Madras and Bombay. As a result, while initiating any move for legislation, the Governor-General and Council could not have the benefit of full acquaintance with all relevant particulars regarding the particular interests, needs and opinions of those two Presidencies. This created problems for the Administrations in Madras and Bombay. It was necessary to remove this defect in the centralisation of legislation. Besides, the need was felt for

Charter Act
of 1853

inclusion of some 'Legislative Councillors' in the Governor-General's Council to help in legislation. This resulted in the formation of a Legislative Council.

The members of this Legislative Council were: (a) the Governor-General and the members of his Council; (b) one member from each Presidency and province under a Lieutenant-Governor, having not less than ten years' experience as an officer of the Company, and nominated as a member of the Legislative Council by the respective Governor or Lieutenant-Governor; (c) the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Calcutta and a Puisne Judge; (d) two nominees

Legislative
Council

of the Governor-General. The nomination of such members was subject to approval by the Court of Directors of the Company in England

and the Board of Control which had a member of the Ministry in England as its President. In fact, no such members were ever nominated. So the Legislative Council actually consisted of 12 members: the Governor-General and 5 members of his Council; 4 nominees of the Provincial Administrations (Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, *i.e.*, present Uttar Pradesh except the Oudh districts; 2 Judges. The Governor-General was the President of the Legislative Council. Excepting him and the members of his Council, the six others could not take part in the proceedings of the Governor-General's Council in respect of matters other than legislation. In actual fact, the Legislative Council was merely an extension of the old Governor-General's Council. It is doubtful whether it can be regarded as a separate entity, as distinct from the Council. Lord Dalhousie, who was then Governor-General, however, regarded it as a body with a distinctive identity and accordingly prescribed the procedure to be followed by it on the model of the House of Lords in England.

Anyway, the four Provincial Administrations could now make their voices heard through their nominees in the Legislative Council. The defects of the centralisation of legislation were to some extent done away with. But, not to speak of

representatives of the people, even inclusion of an Indian nominee of the Central Government or any Provincial Administration was not considered possible. Inclusion of two Judges of the Supreme Court as members of the Legislative Council made legal expertise available on a broader scale than before for purposes of law-making. Previously, only the 'Law Member' was available for the purpose.

This Legislative Council was in existence from 1854 to 1861, After that the composition and procedure were changed through new legislation (the Indian Councils Act, 1861).

The Charter Act of 1833 set up a new body to assist the Governor-General and Council in revising the existing Acts and drafting new ones. This was the 'Law Commission'. It was first formed under Lord William Bentinck.

Macaulay, the first 'Law Member' in the Law Commission Governor-General's Council, presided over it. He prepared several draft laws, the Indian Penal Code being the most well-known among them. Afterwards, the Law Commission was reconstituted several times and prepared the drafts of a good many laws.

District Administration: Quite early under the Company's rule, the district was considered to be the single most important unit of administration, and districtwise administration was accordingly introduced. This system still continues. During the last two centuries many districts have been transferred from the jurisdiction of one province to another, many new districts have been formed, and the administrative structure has been vastly changed at the upper levels. But the districts have lost nothing of their importance in the sphere of administration.

At the time of Cornwallis (1786-93) the Company's province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa had been divided into 16 big districts. Later on, for administrative convenience and other reasons, the number of districts was increased. For example, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts were formed

when there was an expansion of the British Raj as a result of the war with Bhutan. In 1947, there were 28 districts in undivided Bengal. In the third decade of the nineteenth century, some districts were split up into more than one sub-divisions and the post of Divisional Commissioner was created to exercise supervision over several districts. Afterwards, this system was further extended with the establishment of a regular three-tier administrative structure comprising the sub-division, the district and the division. Of these, the district continued to be treated as the most important unit.

The Administration had three basic aims under the Company: revenue collection, maintenance of law and order, and dispensing of civil and criminal justice. The district authorities were entrusted with responsibilities in respect of all the three. There was close inter-connection between all these three subjects. The district administrative structure, which emerged after several experiments from the Governor-Generalship of Cornwallis to that of Bentinck (1828-35), had at its apex two principal officials: the District Magistrate and Collector and the District and Sessions Judge. The district Superintendent of Police was generally under the control of the Magistrate.

Administrative Reforms: Hastings: Warren Hastings headed the administration of Bengal for nearly thirteen years (1772-85), first as Governor (1772-74), and then as Governor-General under the Regulating Act. He was an extraordinarily talented administrator. He introduced wholesale reforms into the moribund administrative structure which was a legacy from the Mughal period and gave it a new shape. In politics as well as administration, he showed the way to later British administrators.

After the battle of Plassey, revolutionary changes all around and at different levels had brought Bengal to the verge of anarchy. The Famine of 1770 had made the situation

worse. In 1772, immediately after taking over as Governor, Hastings took various steps for improvement in the law-and-order situation and in the administration of criminal justice. The Nawab, as the head of the *Nizamat*, was still legally in charge of these two subjects. The Company with its charge of the *Dewani* had, legally speaking, no right of intervention in these spheres. But the actual political condition and the terms of the treaties with the Company had made the Nawab virtually a helpless puppet in its hands. As a result, Hastings had to take over the direction of both *Dewani* and *Nizamat* affairs.

A criminal court was set up in each district for trying criminal cases. Cases were dealt with by the Muslim *Qazis* and *Muftis*, with the European Collector in a supervisory role. A central criminal court (*Sadar Nizamat Adalat*) was established in Calcutta. In all these courts, trial was held according to Islamic law. Intervention of English officers was provided for to remove some of the defects of this law.

Under the Mughals, the *Fouzdars* were responsible for internal law and order. The *Thanadars* exercised police functions and were granted land in lieu of salary for their upkeep. There was disorder in rural areas due to abolition of this long-established system. *Fouzdars* were again appointed by Hastings in some districts.

Even before this policy of Hastings could produce any tangible result, a new policy was adopted. Muhammad Reza Khan was given the charge of supervising work relating to law and order as well as criminal justice (1776). He appointed *Fouzdars* in different districts, continuing the system initiated earlier by Hastings. This did not produce the desired results due to a variety of reasons. In 1781, the Governor-General and Council abolished the posts of *Fouzdars* and entrusted their duties to the English Judges of the district *Dewani Adalats* (civil courts). They were given the additional designation of 'Magistrate'. In this way, the posts of Judges and Magistrates

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were combined and the authority of the *Fouzdars* was replaced by that of the English officers in the sphere of law and order. For economy in expenditure, the district criminal courts were reduced in number. So long the zamindars had been responsible in their own areas for prevention of crimes such as murder, robbery and theft as also for arrest of criminals. The duties of the present-day police were then performed in the rural areas by individuals employed by the zamindars for the purpose. For these functions, the zamindars were accountable to the English Judge-Magistrates.

As directed by the Court of Directors, Hastings assumed direct charge of the *Dewani* in 1772 i.e., the policy of entrusting revenue collection to the Company's officers was adopted. The two *Naib Dewans* (Muhammed Reza Khan in Bengal and Shitab Rai in Bihar) who had been collecting revenues on behalf of the Company lost their offices. In the districts, revenue collection was entrusted to English officers who were given the designation of 'Collector'. A committee of Circuit was formed in Calcutta to supervise their work. The Governor (Hastings) and four members of the Council became members of this Committee. Within a very short period, this Committee was replaced by a 'Board or Council of Revenue', with the Governor and all members of the Council as its members. The head office of revenue-collecting apparatus was brought over from Murshidabad to Calcutta. Murshidabad, though the residence of the Nawab, lost its prestige as the capital. As the nerve centre of the new administrative set-up, Calcutta became the real capital of Bengal. The responsibility for collection of revenue passed on from Indian to English officers.

In 1773, under instructions from the Court of Directors, the Collectors were relieved of the task of collecting revenues. Six Provincial Councils (Calcutta, Burdwan, Murshidabad, Dinajpur, Dacca, Patna) were formed for the whole of the Bengal Presidency. Each Council was headed by a chief and four members, all of whom were officers of the Company.

As the performance of these Councils was hardly satisfactory, Hastings set up the Amini Commission in 1776 for collecting precise data regarding land valuation. Its members were two English officers. As Hastings had formed the Amini Commission by exercising his casting vote as Governor-General, he was taken to task by the Court of Directors, though the Commission's report (1778) contained many valuable particulars which were helpful in effecting reforms in the land revenue system.

In 1781, the Provincial Councils were abolished and a central 'Committee of Revenue' was set up in Calcutta. Its members were four English officers. The Committee functioned under the supervision of the Governor-General and Council. English Collectors and Indian *Naibs* (deputies) collected revenues with the Committee as the guiding authority.

In 1786, a 'Board of Revenue' replaced the 'Committee of Revenue' under instructions from the Court of Directors. Hastings had by then retired and returned home and the administration of Bengal was temporarily in the hands of Macpherson, (1785-86), the acting Governor-General. All matters pertaining to revenues were brought under the control of the Board. Afterwards the authority of the Board was extended to Benares and the North-Western Provinces.

After the assumption of the *Dewani* by the Company, Muhammed Reza Khan, the *Naib Dewan* used to exercise supervision over disposal of civil cases in Bengal, but he had to do this on the advice of the English Resident at the Nawab's *Durbar*. In Bihar, this function rested with the Deputy Nawab, Shitab Rai. In 1772, Hastings introduced a new system. A civil court was established in every district. All cases relating to succession in property, loans, commercial transactions, marriage etc. were tried in this court. Only Civil justice succession issues concerning landed properties

were to be decided by the Governor and Council. The European Collector of the district became the Judge of the district civil court; he was assisted in this by the Indian staff

of the court. A central civil court (*Sadar Dewani Adalat*) was set up in Calcutta for hearing appeals.

The revenue and the civil justice systems were closely inter-linked. When in 1770 six Provincial Councils were set up for collection of revenues, a civil court was attached to each Council. Each member of the Council acted as presiding judge of this court for a period of one month in rotation. Cases were not tried with any great competence in these provincial courts. In a particular case, the Supreme Court made certain adverse remarks regarding the composition of the Patna Provincial Court and the procedure followed by it.

Hastings was fully aware of these shortcomings of the provincial courts. Under his advice, new system was introduced in 1781. Instead of the six provincial courts eighteen 'Mofussil Civil Courts' were set up. Cases were tried mostly by English officers with the designation of 'Judge'. The links between revenue collection and civil justice were snapped. Collection of revenue became the Collector's charge. As the Chief Justice of the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*, Impey prepared certain 'Regulations' concerning the trial of cases in the civil courts. These were adopted by the Governor-General and Council in the form of a Code (1781).

The measures of Hastings relating to the civil service will be dealt with later on. He took some measures for improvement of the postal services. The unfair advantages in respect of private trade which the Company's officers and the brokers in the Company's service had been enjoying since the battle of Plassey were stopped under orders from Hastings. The *dastak* (permit) system, previously in existence, under which the Company's officers carried on duty-free private trade for their personal benefit, was altogether abolished by him. To facilitate trade and commerce, the customs houses (*chowkies*) maintained by the zamindars were broken up. However, five central customs houses were maintained in five principal centres (Calcutta, Murshidabad, Hooghly, Patna, Dacca). The trade duties were reduced to a uniform rate

of 2½ per cent for all goods excepting salt, betelnut and tobacco, trade in which remained the Company's monopoly.

Even a superficial analysis of the administrative measures of Hastings reveals a clear tendency towards centralisation. The location in Calcutta of the highest revenue authorities (the Committee of Revenue, the Board of Revenue), of the highest civil court (the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*) as also of the treasury eclipsed the importance of Murshidabad, the Estimate centre of the Nawab's rule. Though some vestiges of the Mughal system still lingered on at different levels of administration and in the laws in force, the authority of the English officers in all spheres began gradually to shape the machinery of administration anew.

The tenure of Hastings was a period of change and experimentation. Hastings presided over the destiny of Bengal in the transitional phase when on the one side the Mughal system of administration was crumbling away and on the other the inexperienced English rulers, with their limited knowledge of the country they had taken over, were building up a new administrative system in its place. Complex political problems of areas outside Bengal and questions of war and peace frequently diverted his attention from administrative duties. In Calcutta, the Council and the Supreme Court used in various ways to put obstacles to a smooth functioning of the administration. The instructions from the Court of Directors not infrequently prevented Hastings from pursuing policies of his own. An objective estimate of his achievements as an administrator will have to take all these factors into consideration. Hastings was not, as was Lord Cornwallis, blessed with the backing of the Cabinet in England. The two special powers (the right to act according to own judgment as against the opinion of the majority of members of the Council, and combining the posts of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief), which were granted to Cornwallis and strengthened his position appreciably, were not available for Hastings. Even then Hastings had been more or less able to lay the foundations of the British administrative system. Though

his revenue system failed, it must be admitted that, all in all, his administrative system was in accord with the actual situation and conducive to the removal of disorder. He was far more of a liberal than was Cornwallis in the matter of appointing Indians to responsible posts under the Company.

Administrative Reforms : Cornwallis : Lord Cornwallis headed the administration of Bengal from 1786 to 1793. He did not rise, as did Clive and Hastings, to the top of the administrative ladder from humble beginnings under the Company. He belonged to the aristocracy in England. He was an intimate friend of William Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister, and Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control. He enjoyed the trust of the Court of Directors and was also confident of support in Parliament. The Act of 1786 passed by Parliament authorised him to act against the advice of the majority of the members of his Council. The same Act gave him the post of Commander-in-Chief also and thus placed military power at his disposal. Because of such increase in power, he did not find it difficult to take policy decisions he considered best according to his own judgment. The factors which inhibited Hastings from initiating policies of his own were not operative at the time of Lord Cornwallis.

Pitt's India Act of 1784, passed by Parliament, had emphasised that it was not the objective of the English to conquer territories and extend their political influence in India. This, however, did not stand in the way of Cornwallis when he engaged in war with Tipu Sultan, and having won, brought an extensive area of South India under the Company's control (Third Anglo-Mysore War, 1790-92). Still, it must be admitted that administrative reforms claimed the primary attention of Cornwallis. He was not experienced in Indian affairs like Clive and Hastings, nor had he administrative competence of the highest order. But he was fortunate in having the help of some able servants of the Company. These officers had shown their abilities in different spheres and become well known under Hastings. Among them were John Shore, James Grant and Jonathan Duncan (general

administration), Charles Grant (commercial affairs) and William Jones (judicial affairs). Shore became Governor-General after Cornwallis.

The measures taken by Hastings in 1781 relating to law and order and criminal justice had continued to be in force for several years. In 1787, Cornwallis, under instructions from the Court of Directors, entrusted Collectors with the duties of Magistrates and trial of revenue cases. As Magistrates, the Collectors not only maintained law and order but sometimes also acted as judges in criminal cases. Police and judicial functions were thus combined. The Magistrates were given the right to place zamindars in custody. Such concentration of power in the Collectors' hands did not last long. In 1793, the Collector was relieved of his magisterial duties, which were now entrusted to the Judge. Accordingly, the Judge became responsible for law and order.

Law and order
and criminal
justice

Criminal cases were tried according to Islamic law, which had many defects. For example, in murder cases the motive of the accused was not taken into consideration (*i.e.*, whether he committed the act with the deliberate intent to murder or whether the act was done accidentally was no concern of the law court). The penalty to be imposed depended on how the murder was committed (whether with a sharp weapon or by strangulation, etc.). Again, some offences were punishable with loss of limbs. The evidence of Hindu and Muslim witnesses was not treated at par. No penalty was inflicted on a Muslim on evidence given by a Hindu. The relatives of the murdered person could pardon the murderer after he had compensated them monetarily. When things happened this way, no penalty was imposed by the Court on the accused. Cornwallis removed some of these drawbacks and his reforms placed criminal justice more or less on a sound footing of rational principles and fair play.

Muslim judges of criminal cases were usually considered to be guilty of many corrupt practices. They were appointed

and supervised by Muhammad Reza Khan. Cornwallis removed him, had the central criminal court (*Sadar Nizamat Adalat*) transferred from Murshidabad to Calcutta, and set up four travelling courts known as Courts of Circuit (based in Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca and Patna). Each Court had two English Judges. A *Qazi* and a *Mufti* were to advise them on the peculiarities of Islamic law. Europeans were not subject to trial in the criminal courts of the Company. They could only be tried by Supreme Court in Calcutta.

Cornwallis put through three measures to increase the efficiency of the police. The direct authority which the zamindars enjoyed over the local police was abolished. They were no longer to be responsible for prevention of crimes such as robbery etc. in their own areas. Secondly, each district was divided into several *thanas* (police stations). Each *thana* was in charge of a *Daroga* (police officer) and had such subordinate staff as *Jamadars*, *Barkandazes*, etc. The *Darogas* were to operate under the supervision of the Magistrate. Thirdly, the village *chowkidars* were placed under the *Daroga*, though they were to be paid by the zamindars as before. Keeping order in the villages became a divided responsibility.

Cornwallis made no particular change in the Board of Revenue which was set up in 1786. Under the supervision of the Board, the district Collectors collected revenues in their own areas. When Cornwallis took over the administration, the districts were 38 in number, including Calcutta. Under him the Collection of districts were reduced in number. Those districts which yielded revenues of less than five lakhs of rupees were tagged on to the adjacent districts.

After introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793, the department of civil justice was separated from the department of revenue. The Collector was relieved of the charge of trying revenue cases and also lost his magisterial powers. He became solely an officer in charge of revenue collection.

In 1787, the functions of the Judge and the Magistrate were entrusted to the Collector under instructions from the Court of

Directors. Only the Civil Courts in Patna, Murshidabad and Dacca were placed under separate judges. In matters relating to revenue collection, the Collector was under the control of the Board of Revenue. As judge, he was accountable to the Governor-General and Council and the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*. The whole of a district was the jurisdiction of one *Dewani Adalat* of the area. The only exceptions were in the cases of the three districts mentioned above.

Civil cases.

This system was basically transformed in 1793. The department of civil justice was entirely separated from that of revenue. The Collector's judicial powers in revenue cases were taken away and entrusted to the *Dewani Adalat*. There had already been one court in one district and three city courts in the three cities of Patna, Murshidabad and Dacca. The judges of these courts tried all sorts of civil cases. They all were English officers. Under the new system, four new courts were set up (Calcutta, Patna, Murshidabad and Dacca). These were Provincial Courts of Appeal and acted as connecting links between the district courts and the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*. There were three English judges in each Provincial Court. Appeals could be preferred before the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* against their judgments in major cases. Settlement of very minor civil disputes was put in charge of 'Native Commissioners'. They were divided into three classes: (1) Amin; (2) Salish; (3) Munsif. They could only try cases involving less than rupees fifty.

Hastings had arranged for an increase in the number of courts and seen to it that these new courts were set up in different areas of Bengal at more or less equal distances from each other. He was alive to the necessity of separating judicial functions from those relating to revenue collection. As such, the steps taken by Cornwallis led to an extension of the reforms which Hastings had set in motion. Cornwallis put emphasis on improvement of procedure so far as the judiciary was concerned.

The principal achievement of Cornwallis as a reformer

in the sphere of administration was the introduction of the Rule of Law. The laws (Regulations) were consolidated in the form of a code (Cornwallis Code). A new Regulation (1793) declared that all Government servants 'shall be amenable to the courts for acts done in their official capacities', and that in regard to disputes on property between the Government and its subjects the former 'shall submit its right to be tried in these courts under the existing laws and regulations'. As a result, Government servants and the Government itself did not any longer have any scope for taking recourse to extra legal methods in their activities. If any subject suffered due to extra-legal activities, he was now free to seek redress in court and the orders of the court were equally binding on the subject, the Government servant and the Government. Thus was introduced the principle of safeguarding the citizen's individual rights on the basis of law. This principle was not in existence under the Mughal system.

Cornwallis introduced reforms in the Company's management of its commercial activities. The members of the Board of Trade were reduced in number and measures to put a stop to corrupt practices among the Company's servants were further tightened. The postal system was improved.

The most important of the measures taken by Cornwallis as a reformer was the introduction of the Permanent Settlement. Before him the zamindar had no permanent right in the land.

Permanent Settlement Whoever agreed to pay revenue to the Government at the highest rates was recognised as the revenue collector for a certain number of years.

After the stipulated period was over, the zamindar's right to the land came to an end. The same process of allotting the land to the highest bidder then began anew. Thus a zamindar, being uncertain of his future right to the land, simply concentrated on extracting the maximum benefits for himself within the stipulated period by fleecing the ryots. No attention

Warren Hastings whatsoever was paid to improving the land. This reduced the ryot to paupery and made the land less and

less productive as time went on. The system was also not profitable to the Company in many cases. Many agreed to pay exorbitant rates just to get hold of the zamindari, but failed to pay the Company the stipulated rates in spite of all sorts of extortions from the ryots. Thus, the annual income of the Company from this source could never be estimated firmly. Naturally, great difficulties were faced in carrying on the administration in such a situation. Thus the system of temporary land tenure for zamindars proved harmful to, and created disadvantages for, all concerned—the Company, the zamindar and the ryot.

Thus many came to hold the view that the land revenues to be paid by the zamindars should be fixed permanently. Sir Philip Francis, a member of the Council of Hastings, made this idea popular with the Company's authorities in England. The Court of Directors instructed Lord Cornwallis to come to a ten-year arrangement with the zamindars. Accordingly, in 1790, the ten-year settlement, (Decennial Settlement) was introduced by him. Some data were collected for this purpose. On the basis of these incomplete data Cornwallis came to the conclusion that it would not be unwise to transform the ten-year settlement into a permanent settlement. He ignored the advice of John Shore, who was an expert on the revenue system in Bengal and who succeeded him as Governor-General, and decided that the zamindari system under the Company should be brought in line with the system prevailing in England. The zamindar's title to the land would be hereditary and he would pay revenues to the Company at a fixed rate and by a due date. This rate would also be fixed for all time. However, if the zamindar failed to deposit the fixed revenue by the due date he would lose his title to the land which would revert to the Company. The system of permanent settlement, recommended for adoption by Lord Cornwallis and approved by the Company's authorities, was introduced in 1793: the ten-year settlement was declared to be a permanent settlement. At first, the system came into effect in Bengal-Bihar-Orissa. Later on, it was also introduced in Benares and partially in the Madras Presidency.

The Permanent Settlement dominated the society and economy of Bengal for nearly 160 years. It was abolished in 1953 after India had attained independence. At the time of Cornwallis, no exact facts and figures were available with the Company regarding the size and actual income of zamindaris, the extent of rent-free and trust land as also of pastures and fallow land, etc. As a result, there were a great many complications and no end to law-suits seeking to protect conflicting interests.

Effects of
Permanent
Settlement

The zamindars could not adjust their ways with the system which threatened to forfeit their holdings if they failed to deposit the Company's revenue by the due date. The system was not so severe under the Mughals; then the zamindars were penalised in diverse way if they failed to pay up their dues, but there was no forfeiture of titles to land. Many old families in Bengal could not stand up to the pressure of the new system of Cornwallis. Within twenty years of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, about one-third to one-half of the zamindaris of Bengal were sold out. A number of affluent businessmen turned into zamindars by purchasing such landed properties. A new type of zamindars thus came into being. The zamindars enjoyed high social status and considerable power in the rural belts. This favoured investment of money in land. However, capital diverted to land was a loss to business to that extent. In this way, the economy and the social system of Bengal gradually centred round the ownership of land.

The old zamindar families frequently collected money for meeting the Government dues in time by leasing parts of their estates to middlemen and thus created a rich class of intermediaries. Such leasing of land was contrary to the objectives of the Permanent Settlement; but circumstances made this one of the main features of the system. The middlemen occupied a prominent place in the land revenue system.

Though the revenue payable by the zamindar was fixed permanently, the rent to be paid by the ryot was not so fixed. The zamindar could increase the rent and evict the tenant quite

arbitrarily. What the peasant gathered from the land through hard toil was shared by the zamindar who enjoyed profit without any exertion. The increase of population and the decline in industry gradually made more and more people dependent on agriculture. As a result, there was a scramble for land among the peasants, and their competition was a boon for the zamindars who seized the opportunity to raise rents. Government intervention did little to protect the ryots for about seventy years. A change in official policy came after the end of the Company's regime. Two particularly important Acts were passed in 1859 and 1885 dealing with the tenants' right to land-holdings. These two Acts put a brake on the zamindars' powers to a great extent and the conditions were eased for the ryots in a number of ways.

Though the certainty of getting the revenues on the due date was a positive gain for the Government, it was a loser from another aspect. The exact amount to be paid by the zamindar being fixed in perpetuity, the Government lost the option to augment its income from this source. It could not hope to get any share from the increases in the ryots' rents; nor did any share of the income from any fallow land put to the plough accrue to it. Whenever the Government needed additional resources for administrative purposes or for conducting war, there was no option but to resort to fresh taxation.

The Permanent Settlement created an influential class of zamindars and an affluent middle class in Bengal. The zamindars of Bengal were at one time very prominent among those who supported British rule in India. On the other hand, they also contributed to the well-being of the country by championing a variety of causes which benefited the people. By setting up numerous schools and hospitals and causing tanks to be dug and roads built, they provided many badly needed amenities to the people. In the later stages their beneficial role faded virtually into a memory of the past; they severed all links with the people by becoming absentee landlords residing in the urban centres. The social and economic conditions which had favoured the rise of the zamindar class were totally transformed in the

twentieth century. As such, it was inevitable that the Zamindari system should be abolished in independent India.

Administrative Reforms: Lord Hastings: There was no important changes in the administrative structure set up by Lord Cornwallis in the two decades after him. Lord Hastings (1813-23) introduced reforms regarding the organisational structure and procedure of the Police Department. Improvements were made in the system of criminal justice, and some defects of the Islamic law were rectified. Some changes were also made in the system of civil justice and there was an increase in the powers of the Munsifs. Cornwallis had created some difficulties by his separation of the judicial and revenue systems. Collectors now gradually began to be entrusted, although in a limited way, with the powers of Magistrates.

Influence of Utilitarianism: During the period from Lord Hastings to Lord Bentinck, the reforms in the Company's administrative system were influenced by the British philosophical theory of Utilitarianism. This theory was propounded by Jeremy Bentham. Its basic principle was 'the greatest good of the greatest number'. The utilitarians wanted to apply this theory in the spheres of administration and law. One of the chief disciples of Bentham was James Mill. He and his son, John Stuart Mill, the famous philosopher, for long occupied high positions in the Company's office in London. James Mill was the author of a massive history of India under the Company. Lord Bentinck and Macaulay were influenced by Utilitarianism.

Administrative Reforms: Lord Bentinck: Macaulay was a colleague of Bentinck as the 'Law Member' of his Council. He describes Bentinck as a benevolent ruler 'who infused into oriental despotism the spirit of British freedom; who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; who abolished cruel rites; who effaced humiliating distinctions; who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the Government committed to his charge'. Some justification

for such an eulogy may be found in the reforms, social and administrative, associated with the name of Bentinck.

Bentinck introduced several significant reforms in the judiciary. The Provincial Courts of Appeal had in reality been reduced to places of rest for the civil service, *i.e.*, the servants of the Company actually enjoyed rest while ostensibly acting as judges. These courts were, therefore, abolished. This did away with idleness in the higher echelons of the judiciary and wastage of the Government's money. The policy of recruiting Indians to the lower judiciary was liberalised. Munsifs and others were given greater responsibilities and higher pay. In many cases, the functions of the Magistrate were taken away from the Judge and handed over to the Collector. This represented a basic change in the system of Cornwallis. Later, this changed system was transformed into a general principle. The Collector-Magistrates became subject to inspection by Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit. The Commissioners were instructed to keep in touch with the people in their areas through regular tours. Local language replaced Persian in the work of the courts. Indian 'Deputy Collectors' were appointed. Bentinck was a clear-sighted man in diverse matters pertaining to administration. The 'Law Commission' was set up during his tenure in terms of the Charter Act of 1833, and a process of fresh law-making was initiated by Macaulay. The draft of the Indian Penal Code prepared by Macaulay was influenced by Utilitarianism.

Administrative Reforms : Dalhousie : The administrative framework had already been given a definite and fixed form before Lord Dalhousie's administration (1848-56). As such, no basic changes were necessary in this sphere. But he was very careful to ensure that the administrative machinery was run smoothly and efficiently. The administration of Bengal having been entrusted to a Lieutenant-Governor under the Charter Act of 1853, the direct responsibility of the Governor-General and his Council for this province was somewhat lessened.

Dalhousie made special arrangements for administering the newly conquered Punjab (1849) and Pegu (1852), a province of

Burma. A three-member Board was formed to carry on the administration of the Punjab. Within a very short period, the Board was replaced by a Chief Commissioner, who was under the direct control of the Governor-General and Council. John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, set up a remarkable administrative system in the Punjab. He became the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, and rose to be the Governor-General later on. Similarly, Pegu was placed under a Commissioner directly responsible to the Governor-General in Council. Two other provinces of Burma (Arakan and Tenasserim), annexed after the First Burmese War in 1826, were also administered by two Commissioners. Afterwards, all the three Burmese provinces were jointly placed under a Chief Commissioner (1862).

Civil Service: In the 17th century, the Company's servants were required to deal with commercial matters only; naturally their recruitment and method of work were basically commerce-oriented. They were recruited as 'Apprentices' on a slender pay Age of commerce and at a very tender age. In the next stage they became 'Writers'. Their work then mainly lay in copying letters etc. and maintaining ledgers. Pay ranged from ten to twenty pounds per annum. There were three successive stages in the ladder of promotion—'Factor', 'Junior Merchant', and 'Senior Merchant'. Normally, the members of the Council and the President were appointed from among the Senior Merchants. The Directors of the Company made the appointments. Their nominees could enter the Company's service as 'Writers' without appearing in any competitive examination.

Before the battle of Plassey, the administrative responsibilities of the Company's servants had been restricted to the three Presidency cities: Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. Afterwards, the Company's servants had to assume responsibilities in respect of revenue collection and administration of civil justice in the districts in which the Company was granted zamindari rights by Mir Jafar and Mir Qasim. ('ceded districts'). They were initiated into administrative work in this way.

The system of Double Government was in force for several years (1765-72) after the grant of the *Dewani*. Though at that time the Company had not yet taken over the *Dewani* directly, its servants had to engage, to a certain extent, in work relating to revenue collection and civil justice. Even before Plassey they were involved in various corrupt practices re-
Corruption
 regarding private trade because of their greed for easy money. After Plassey, the weakness of the Nawab and the increase in the Company's powers made for a corresponding increase in their greed as well as opportunity. Clive tried, but did not succeed, in preventing corruption among the Company's servants. During the Famine of 1770, even highly placed officers of the Company engaged in corruption. Both the Regulating Act (1773) and Pitt's India Act (1784) included provisions intended to check corrupt practices, but these were far from being implemented. Many servants of the Company used to collect immense riches in India and throw their weight about in English society and politics after they had returned home with their ill-gotten gains. They used to be sarcastically described as 'Indian Nabobs'.

In order that the newly established administrative system of the Company was run competently, it was necessary that its servants should be well-acquainted with the Indian languages, traditional laws and social customs. Warren Hastings proposed the creation of a post of Professor of Persian language at Oxford so that the 'Writers' selected for appointment under the Company could learn that language which was the official language inherited from Mughal times; but the Court of Directors did not approve of the scheme. Still, he encouraged
Warren Hastings
 them to learn Indian languages' classical and modern. Good performance in learning languages was rewarded by promotion in service. Financial help was extended for translation of ancient books on Hindu and Islamic law as also the 'Regulations' of the Company. The names of Charles Wilkins and Nathaniel Halhead should particularly be mentioned in this connection.

Lord Cornwallis continued the policy of encouraging the Company's servants to learn the local languages; they were allowed extra allowances for engaging teachers (Munshis) for that purpose. To discourage corrupt practices among the Company's servants, their salaries and allowances were increased. But a ban was imposed on the usual practice of earning extra money, by working in more than one department at a time and engaging in private trade.

To get the Company's servants properly trained for efficient discharge of their duties, Lord Wellesley introduced a new scheme. The Company's tentacles were then being extended to different parts of the country. The political responsibilities of the Company were increasing due to application of the policy of 'Subsidiary Alliance'. The type of education that was needed to cope with such constantly increasing responsibilities could hardly be had from learning Persian and Urdu from the *Munshis*. To meet this difficulty Wellesley founded the Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800.

The management of the Fort William College was under the direct control of the Governor-General in Council. Here 'principles of Christian religion, discipline and rites' were taught. Particular attention was given to ensure that the learners were not influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution. The subjects for study were the Oriental languages, Hindu and Islamic Law, Regulations made by the Governor-General in Council, Economics (including the commercial affairs of the Company), Geography, Mathematics, the classical and modern languages of Europe, ancient and modern European history, Indian history and Archaeology, natural science, Botany, Chemistry and Astronomy. It was not possible to study all these subjects within a span of three years. Initially, therefore, the Oriental languages, the laws and Ethics of the East, the Regulations of the Company, and European studies comprised the course. Two examinations were held every year. The learners were subjected to rigorous discipline. Though the College was mainly intended to meet the needs of

the 'Writers' in the Bengal Presidency, those belonging to the Madras and Bombay Presidencies could also get themselves educated here under certain conditions.

In 1802, the Court of Directors disapproved Wellesley's elaborate scheme. Fort William College was to teach the languages only. The measures to ensure discipline among the learners were relaxed. Gradually, even the languages came to be taught indifferently. The learners began to incur debts and live irregularly. In 1832, a Committee of Parliament came to the conclusion that the Fort William College, instead of being a centre for education, had been turned into a centre for incurring debts. If the Court of Directors had not turned down Wellesley's ambitious scheme pleading paucity of money and other reasons for the decision, it is possible that the College would not have gone down so tragically. It was totally wound up in 1854.

Meanwhile, the Court of Directors had made an alternative arrangement, for getting the 'Writers' educated in England. In 1805, the 'East India College' was founded. At first it functioned at Hertford castle; then it was permanently accommodated at Haileybury and came to be known as the Haileybury College. This institution was intended to produce a well-planned system of education. At first it was arranged that students were to be enrolled here at 15 and their education was to continue till 18, or till they were sent over to India. Later, the age of admission was raised to 17, and still later, to 21. Among the subjects for study were Mathematics, science, classical and modern European literature, European history, Economics, English law, the languages of the East, and the history of Asia. Arabic and Persian languages were given special importance. Sanskrit, Hindi, Hindustani, Bengali, Telugu and Marathi languages were also taught. Care was taken to impart teaching in Christianity and morality. The object was to ensure that the atheistic messages of the French Revolution did not in any way contaminate the Company's servants.

Haileybury
College

The management of Haileybury College was jointly under the control of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. It was provided in the Charter Act of 1813 that nobody who had not studied at the Haileybury College for two years and received its certificate could be appointed as a 'Writer'. This disqualification was removed in 1826. Under the Charter Act of 1833 the principle of recruitment to the post of 'Writer' through competitive examination was adopted partially but was not given effect to in practice. In 1837, it was arranged that only students of high calibre should be admitted to the Haileybury College, but this change did not produce the desired result.

There was no consensus among knowledgeable persons about the achievements of the Haileybury College. One of the highly placed officers of the Company as well as a historian and philosopher, James Mill, stated that few among the students of the College took any real interest in their studies, and there was much indiscipline. Some others, however, were of the opinion that the friendship and *esprit de corps* which grew out of living together at a tender age and having the same education produced good results afterwards in service life.

The Charter Act of 1853 did away with the system of appointing the nominees of the Directors as 'Writers' and provided for a competitive examination in London for the purpose. Thus were the Directors deprived of a powerful lever and a long-continued privilege. They raised the objection that competitive examination could only assess book learning and not the other qualities which would be required of an administrator. A former Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, was one of the principal supporters of this view. But Macaulay and Sir Charles Wood the President of the Board of Control, firmly opposed this stand. They were of the opinion that those who surpassed others of the same age-group in academic excellence early in life also gave a better account of themselves later in their careers.

A Committee of experts under the chairmanship of Macaulay framed the Regulations relating to the competitive examination. It was to be held under the direction of the Board of Control. The first examination was held in 1855. Then it became an annual affair. Nobody who did not come out successful in the examination was considered to be fit for the Company's covenanted service.

The syllabus for the competitive examination was prepared to suit the students of Oxford and Cambridge Universities who usually sat for the examination. As a result, it was not necessary for the recruits to get educated at the Haileybury College which went out of existence in 1858.

Appointment of Indians to high posts : During the administration of Warren Hastings there was no legal bar to opening the higher posts to the Indians. Though the Warren Hastings English servants of the Company dominated in every sphere, the Indians were not kept out altogether. Raja Rammohan Roy stated that a 'mixed administrative system' was in force prior to 1793 ; there was an intermixture of both European and Indian customs and traditions in the laws and regulations, and the servants of the Company comprised Europeans as well as Indians.

Cornwallis made a basic change in this system. Under his direction, the entire administrative system was put in charge of English officers and the Indian element in it Cornwallis was removed, as far as practicable. Raja Rammohan Roy observed that by this basic change Cornwallis brought the Indian institutions closer to similar institutions in England.

This change in policy naturally put a stop to appointment of Indians to high posts. Those who were conversant only with the Indian system could not be expected to take to the European way in conducting the administration ; so all responsible work could only be entrusted to the European servants of the Company. This was the conclusion reached, and

there was another motivation for this. Cornwallis considered the Indians to be lacking in 'honesty and integrity as also less competent than the Europeans.

This policy of excluding Indians from high posts was upheld by the Charter Act of 1793. It provided for appointment of only 'covenanted servants' in administrative jobs under the Company. There were cases in which this provision was sidetracked because the appointees were Europeans. Long afterwards, in 1861, all such irregular appointments made till then were regularised by making these lawful. However, so far as Indians were concerned, the restrictive provision of the Act of 1793 was adhered to in full. As a result, Indians could not expect to occupy high posts. The 'covenanted servants' were the nominees of the Directors in London ; such nominations were entirely out of reach for Indians.

In the sphere of civil justice, the practice of having the petty cases tried by Indian Munsifs and Sadar Amins had already been introduced early in the 19th century. Owing to paucity of Europeans to do this work, the numbers and powers of these Bentinck Indians were gradually increased. Under Lord William Bentinck, the office of Principal Sadar Amin was created. Salaries of Munsifs, Sadar Amins and the Principal Sadar Amin were fixed respectively at Rs. 100, Rs. 250, and Rs. 500. Their powers were increased. The Munsifs could try civil suits valued up to Rs. 300, the Sadar Amins up to Rs. 1,000 and the Principal Sadar Amin up to Rs. 5,000. In some cases, petty criminal suits were also entrusted to the Sadar Amins and the Principal Sadar Amin.

It was under Bentinck that the post of 'Deputy Collector' was created to assist the District Magistrate in his duties. The post of 'Deputy Magistrate' was created later under Lord Ellenborough. Normally, Indians were appointed to these two categories of posts.

Some experienced and liberal administrators of those times did not approve of the policy of excluding Indians from high

posts. Those to be particularly mentioned are Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras, Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, and Sir John Malcolm. The Charter Act of 1833 laid down a new policy. It was stated that no Indian would be considered ineligible for appointment to any post under the Company simply because of his religion, place of birth, origin, caste, colour etc. This was, in essence, the principle that qualification should be the sole criterion for appointment to Government service, and that colour or religion as such should have nothing to do with it. The policy of Cornwallis was given up in principle, but the relevant provision of the Charter Act of 1793 was not repealed, *i.e.*, all high posts remained open, as before, to 'covenanted servants' only. As Indians could not secure Directors' nomination for entry into the 'covenanted service' their exclusion from high posts continued. Competitive examination was introduced by the Charter Act of 1853. But London was the sole centre for the examination, and it was next to impossible for the Indians to go there and sit for it. Naturally, no Indian ever reached the coveted 'covenanted' rank under the Company.

Charter Act of
1833

CHAPTER III

PROGRESSIVE TRENDS

From Village to City : The big cities of the Mughal times (Delhi, Lucknow, Murshidabad, Hyderabad) had declined after the introduction of British rule. In their place Calcutta, Madras and Bombay rose to prominence under the patronage of the Company. The rise of these three cities was closely connected

with the fall of the Mughal empire. At first, these were the centres of the Company's commercial activities. Later, with the establishment of the Company's political power, the cities turned into political centres also. As the centres of commerce, administration and newly-introduced western education, these cities began to attract rural people from different areas. As a result, population increased and the varied complexities of urban life began to appear gradually. The urban influence slowly spread into the rural areas and began to affect Indian society at all levels.

When the Company took over the zamindari of Calcutta the city's population was only twelve thousand. In 1802, Calcutta and its suburbs had a population of about sixty thousand. Population began to increase after the battle of Calcutta Plassey. Warren Hastings transferred the centre of administration from Murshidabad to Calcutta. Under the provisions of the Regulating Act, Calcutta became the main political centre of the Company in India. As a result of the expansion of the trading activities of the English, people of different nationalities and castes began to reside permanently in Calcutta. Among them were not only Brahmins and others of high caste, but also lower-caste people such as milkmen, cobblers and goldsmiths. Many among those who flourished in the Calcutta of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in connection with service and commerce under the Company have still streets in Calcutta named after them, *e.g.*, Raja Nabakrishna, Akrur Datta, Hidaram Banerjee, Banamali Sarkar, Baranasi Ghosh, Shovaram Basak. The Raja was closely connected with the Company's administration. For nearly twenty years after the battle of Plassey, the major businessmen in Calcutta were high-caste Hindus. At that time, the Muslim population of Calcutta was very small in number.

Though the traditional structure of the Hindu society remained intact in this new city of the Company, new ideas were constantly infiltrating into it. A famous Englishman of those days has said that Calcutta worshipped money as the

only God. The traditional disabilities connected with race and caste did not stand in the way of anybody prospering in Calcutta. Anyone belonging to any race or caste could do any work or engage in any business and if fortune smiled, could command prestige and authority in society. The signs of toleration and co-existence among different races were becoming clearer as time passed. The rich spent immense sums in connection with social ceremonies like marriage, *sradh* etc. and in worship of different gods and goddesses. Nabakrishna spent rupees nine lakhs in connection with the *sradh* ceremony of his mother. Conspicuous living was one of the chief attractions of urban life. In the third decade of the nineteenth century, an English official stated before a Parliamentary Committee that the people of Calcutta had much attraction for Western luxuries; some of them had well-furnished houses, watches were in use, and drinking was not unknown.

People from different rural areas used to come to Calcutta in large numbers, primarily to seek for livelihood; but in some cases they were also attracted by prospects for education and culture. Among small businessmen, banyans and clerks, the Indians were in a majority. Cultivation of Sanskrit was in favour among the Company's servants at the time of Warren Hastings. To help in their studies, Brahmin scholars used to come over to Calcutta from other places. Early in the 19th century, Calcutta became the centre of English studies. Gradually, knowledge of English became a prime requisite for admission to Government service. Then Calcutta became populous. It was not only that teachers and job-seekers from the upper castes flocked to the capital. Those who could provide useful service to urban living, *e.g.*, servants, coolies, palanquin-bearers, coachmen, shop-keepers, hawkers etc., also came. Beggars, thieves, roughs and such sorts also did not lag behind. Many did not bring over their families to Calcutta; instead they used to go back to their village homes once or twice a year. During these visits, they used to regale their fellow-villagers with details of how life went on in Calcutta.

Attraction of
Calcutta

the great metropolis. In this way the urban influence spread over from Calcutta to the whole of North India. Not only the Bengalis but people from different regions of North India also used to come to Calcutta in quest of a living and then carry over to their own areas the manners and customs which they had imbibed from the great city.

Due to the rise of Calcutta, two other main cities of Bengal—Murshidabad and Dacca—lost their former glories. At one time, Murshidabad city had an area of 12 miles by 10 miles ; but in 1801 its roadways were no longer fit for movement of vehicles. Early in the 18th century, Murshid Quli Khan had

Dacca and
Murshidabad

transferred the capital of Bengal from Dacca to Murshidabad. Though losing importance politically, Dacca had not gone out of the picture so far as trade and business were concerned. In 1765, Dacca and its suburbs had a population of four and half lakhs. In the next forty years, the textile industry of Dacca was totally ruined and the population reduced to two lakhs. At the same time the population of Calcutta was increasing and the urban influence spreading over to the whole of Bengal. Thus the two principal cities of the Mughal period were losing their glamour.

The administrative requirements of the Company led to growth of new district towns. Their importance as centres of district administration was clearly established. Towards the close of the 18th century, no town other than Calcutta had any importance as a centre of commerce. The district towns also

District towns

rose and fell. Near the end of the 18th century, the town of Purnea was more than half of London in extent and the residents numbered fifty thousand. But not long afterwards it was reduced to the position of an insignificant small town. There was an expansion of the towns near to Calcutta (Howrah, Chinsurah, Burdwan) and their population increased. The district towns were intimately connected with the rural areas. Many from the villages used to come to the district towns with a view to securing jobs, shop-keeping, getting educated, and for various other purposes. As

such, the district towns really came under the category of 'rural towns'. Life in these district towns represented a coming together of the urban features of Calcutta and the traditional elements of village society. With the splitting up of districts into sub-divisions, each centre of sub-divisional administration grew into a miniature rural town.

The rise of the middle class was closely connected with the consolidation of British administration and the development of urban life. The middle class was dependent on occupations like Government service, small business, legal practice, practice of medicine, etc. for livelihood. As new territories came under British rule and the administrative machinery proliferated, an increasingly large number of Indians had to be employed in different Government departments. The British mercantile firms, industrial concerns and banks appointed Indians to clerical jobs. As big business fell into the hands of the British capitalists small business provided livelihood for many Indians. The establishment of the Rule of Law under the Cornwallis system increased the number and importance of law courts and an organised legal profession, unknown in the eighteenth century, developed. It was lucrative; it brought social prestige. Naturally it attracted Indians who could acquire necessary qualifications. As the introduction of the western system of medicine was slow, traditional medicine attracted many practitioners. After the establishment of the Calcutta Medical College (1835) Indians took up the practice of western medicine. The partition of zamindari estates, long-term lease of lands by the zamindar *pattani* system, etc., created growing classes of middle-income and low-income land holders.

The Hindus comprised the majority of the middle class. From the time of Cornwallis onwards, responsible Government posts were closed to both Hindus and Muslims. Not very long afterwards, there was the beginning of English education of which the Hindus took the fullest advantage while the Muslims

remained indifferent, even hostile. As a result, the posts which Middle class were open to the Indians were almost exclusively filled up by the Hindus. Those who prospered in small business gradually joined the ranks of the rich. During the early phase of British rule, the Muslims dominated the legal profession. However, this was gradually lost with the introduction of English law in place of Islamic law and the replacement of Persian with the regional languages in the Courts. After the introduction of the Permanent Settlement the income of the land-holder became more secure and his social status rose. Then even members of the middle class began to invest the surplus from their earnings from service or profession in land. As a result, the middle class became closely connected with land-ownership.

The influence of the middle class was particularly pervasive in the cultural and political life of Bengal throughout the whole of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. The middle-class temperament was a product of English education; and in this way the cultural and political ferments in Bengal were influenced by Western ideas. The 'Bengal Renaissance' owed its birth and fruition to the middle class. The message of this regeneration gradually spread to the whole of India. As such, the Bengali middle class should in all fairness be regarded as the pioneer of the Indian Renaissance.*

*The doyen of the Indian historians, Jadunath Sarkar, has stated: "..... under the impact of the British civilisation it (Bengal) became a path-finder and a light-bringer to the rest of India. If Periclean Athens was the school of Hellas, 'the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence', that was Bengal to the rest of India under British rule, but with a borrowed light, which it had made its own with marvellous cunning. In this new Bengal originated every good and great thing of the modern world that passed on to the other provinces of India.....New literary types, reform of the language, social reconstruction, political aspirations, religious movements and even changes in manners that originated in Bengal, passed like ripples in a central eddy, across provincial barriers to the furthest corners of India". (*History of Bengal*, Dacca University, Vol. II, p. 498).

Spread of Western education : In the second half of the eighteenth century, education in Bengal was based on the traditional oriental system. Elementary teaching was imparted at the *Pathshalas* and *Maqtabs*; Sanskrit was taught in the *Tols* and Arabic and Persian in the *Madrasahs*. Higher education meant study of the Hindu scriptures and philosophy for the Hindus and that of the *Koran*, *Hadis* and the Islamic law for the Muslims. The English rulers took no interest in the introduction of Western education, but some of them patronised Oriental learning. Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasah in 1781. A Sanskrit College was set up at Baranasi in 1792 under the patronage of a servant of the Company, Jonathan Duncan. In 1801, Wellesley established the Fort William College in Calcutta for the education of the recruits in the Company's Civil Service. Here it was arranged to teach the Indian languages, including Bengali. At that time it was not customary to provide Government funds for the education of the people in general, or for helping the growth of an educated community.

Traditional
education

In the first half of the 19th century Christian missionaries began the process of introducing English education. Their main objective was to convert the Indians to Christianity. In this, however, they failed signally. The authorities of the Company were opposed to their mission of conversion. Anyway, the Hindus of Bengal were particularly eager to learn English, though the Muslims clung to their traditional system of education. One Robert May set up an English school at Chinsurah in 1814 and within a year sixteen more such schools grew up in the areas nearby. In 1814, an English school was founded at Baranasi through the efforts of Jaynarayan Ghosal. The Baptist missionaries of Serampore established the Baptist Mission College in 1818 and the Bishop's College the year after.

Beginning of
English educa-
tion

The best example of how eager the Bengali Hindus were for English education can be had from the history of the 'Hindu College'. This was founded in Calcutta on 20 January 1817.

Among the sponsors were Ram Mohan Roy, David Hare (who came to Calcutta as a trader in watches but dedicated his life to the spread of English education), Baidyanath Mukherjee and Hindu College the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Sir Hyde East. Radhakanta Deb, a leader of the conservative Hindus, was a prominent member of the Committee of Management of the Hindu College. The chief objective of the College was to educate the sons of 'respectable' Hindus in the English and Indian languages as well as in 'the literature and science of Europe and Asia'. Many famous men of Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century (Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bhudeb Mukherjee, Rajnarayan Basu, Debendranath Tagore) were students of the Hindu College. Louis Vivian Derozio, an Indian of Portuguese extraction, served as a teacher of the Hindu College and imbued his students with the spirit of independent thinking and patriotism.

In the meantime, the obligation of the Government in the matter of disseminating education had been accepted in principle. There was a provision in the Charter Act of 1813 passed by the British Parliament to the effect that for 'revival and improvement of literature', encouragement of educated Indians and 'introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences'

Grants for Western education	among the inhabitants of British India, an amount of not less than one lakh rupees should be spent annually from Government funds.
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Nothing much was, however, done in this respect for a few years. Grants were made only for improvement of the schools set up by Robert May and for publication of school textbooks by two unofficial bodies (Calcutta School Book Society and Calcutta School Society).

In 1823, Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, formed a 'General Committee of Public Instruction' to deal with education. The Court of Directors desired that money should be spent on education only with a view to suitably preparing the sons of 'superior and middle classes of the natives' for Government service. There was no plan at that time for extending the

bounds of knowledge or making higher education available. From 1823 onwards, financial grants were made to the Hindu College ; preference for Sanskritic learning was still strong, and a little earlier the 'Sanskrit College' had been founded in Calcutta at Government cost for improvement of Oriental education. In 1825, a building was constructed out of Government funds to accommodate the Sanskrit and Hindu Colleges.

Ram Mohan's
historic letter

In 1823, Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote a letter to the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, stressing the necessity of English education. This letter is a historic document. He appealed for the introduction of English education in place of Oriental education for improving the minds of the people. The Committees in charge of education did not attach any importance to this letter, for it still thought that knowledge acquired through the Sanskrit and Arabic languages was no less valuable than that acquired through Western education. But the missionaries continued to propagate in favour of English education and the leaders of the Bengali society also leaned very heavily on the side of English education. Among the missionaries the most important role was played by Alexander Duff.

At long last, Government policy was changed during the administration of Lord William Bentinck. At that time, Lord Macaulay, the first Law Member of the Government of India, presided over the Committee in charge of education. There were two schools of opinion in the Committee : the Orientalists led by James Prinsep favoured traditional Eastern education while the Anglicists led by Macaulay advocated the introduction of Western education. As the Committee could not arrive at an agreed view, the matter was placed before the Governor-General and his Council for decision. Bentinck himself was in

Bentinck's
policy

favour of Western education. On 7 March 1835, the Council adopted a Resolution stating that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India ; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of

education would be best employed on English education alone". As a result, the system of English education was placed on a firm footing. It was expected that, even though English education would be accepted initially by a limited number of pupils, it would gradually infiltrate into the society as a whole. By establishing a Medical College in Calcutta in 1835 Bentinck arranged to get the Indians trained in Western medical science.

During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Auckland, some scholarships were introduced for meritorious students so as to encourage English education. In 1842, the name of the Committee in charge of education was changed; till 1855 the Committee controlled all matters relating to education under its new name,

Policies of
Auckland and
Hardinge
'Council of Education'. In the meanwhile, English had replaced Persian in the conduct of Government business. As a result of this change, officials having knowledge of English were required in greater numbers than before. In 1844, Lord Hardinge I, the Governor-General, officially declared that knowledge of English was a requisite qualification for entry into Government service. This made the Hindus still more interested in English education.

From 1846 onwards, the need to establish Universities began to be considered. In 1854, Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, sent an Educational Despatch to Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General. This is the most important document in the history of education in modern India. It laid down the principles of a graded educational system. In accordance with the Despatch, Universities were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. Lord Canning was the Governor-

Foundation of
Universities
General at that time. The University of Calcutta was set up on 24 January 1857; the other two Universities were set up somewhat later in the same year. The whole of North India—from the British-administered part of Burma to Peshawar—came under the jurisdiction of Calcutta University. Arrangement was made for imparting higher education systematically in the colleges under the

supervision of the University. The English schools also came under the control of the University. In the meanwhile, the Hindu College had been divided into two separate institutions. The higher classes came to be known as 'Presidency College' and the junior classes as 'Hindu School'.

The move for English education included female education too. Within a few years of the founding of the Hindu College, several girls' schools had been set up in Calcutta. Among the patrons of female education was Radhakanta Deb. David Hare was also interested in the spread of female education. Later, in 1849, the 'Hindu Balika Vidyalaya' was set up under the patronage of J. E. Drinkwater Bethune, the Law Member of the Government of India. Its management lay with Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar for some years. After Bethune's death, his name was associated with the institution. Wood's Despatch stressed the importance of female education. Dalhousie sanctioned Government funds for running the Bethune School.

Female
education

Crisis of Hindu religion : In the first half of the nineteenth century traditional Hindu religion had to face attacks on two fronts. On the one side were the Christian missionaries ; on the other, the English-educated younger generation of the Hindus. Hindu religion was by then a weakened force due to a variety of reasons. There was more of rituals and customs than of spiritual quest and knowledge of the basic tenets. A number of evil practices (*e.g.*, burning of widows, child marriage, polygamy, etc.) were considered to have the approval of Hindu religion and propagated as such. The caste system was extremely rigid outside Calcutta. Many superstitions seemed to be indistinguishable from religion as it was preached and practised. In order to attract the Hindus to Christianity, Christian missionaries used to highlight these shortcomings. Young Hindus having the benefit of Western education were becoming used to independent thinking. Their rational outlook naturally revolted against the evil practices and superstitions associated with their ancestral religion. But they were actually blinded by the temporary degeneration of the

religion and were thus unable to probe into its deepest roots and appreciate its fundamental message.

The missionaries had already begun to propagate Christianity in Bengal in the last years of the eighteenth century. A systematic beginning was made by the Baptist Mission of Serampore. This Mission had been established in 1800; William Carey and J. C. Marshman were associated with it. Carey translated the Bible into Bengali with the help of Ramram Basu. This Bengali version was distributed among the Bengalis. The Baptist missionaries also used to utilise the medium of English education to help spread Christianity. But they were not able to convert more than three hundred persons till 1810.

The Charter Act of 1813 paved the way for the coming of the missionaries to India. As a result, the missionaries from England and Scotland set up different Christian Societies in Calcutta within the next few years. Of them, particularly worthy of mention was Alexander Duff of the Scottish Mission. He arrived in Calcutta in 1830 and began to propagate Christianity. It was his impression that he would be able to extend the influence of Christianity to the upper level of the Bengali society through the medium of English education. With this end in view, he set up a College in Calcutta (General Assembly's Institution, later known as the Scottish Church College). A few more missionary Colleges (St. Xavier's College, La Martiniere, Doveton College, Loreto College) were set up in Calcutta during the period from 1835 to 1841. Though the missionaries harmed Hindu religion through their use of education as an instrument of proselytisation, they at the same time contributed much to the spread of Western education.

The conversion to Christianity of high-born Hindus like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Krishnamohan Banerjee and Jnanendramohan Tagore created consternation in the Hindu society. Sometimes the missionaries used to launch their offensive against the Hindu religion in intemperate language. They were always ready to take advantage of the anti-Hindu

sentiments of the students of Hindu College. Duff distributed a book, *India and India Missions*, which was a sustained attack on Hindu religion, culture and the Vedanta philosophy. This was objected to most vehemently by the Brahmo Samaj. However, Duff's missionary activities hardly yielded any great results. Very few people embraced Christianity, though many among those educated in the missionary schools and Colleges were influenced by its message. Duff returned to his own country in 1863.

Derozio, whose name has already been mentioned, taught at the Hindu College only for three years (1828-1831). He was dismissed by the Managing Committee of the 'Young Bengal' College because of his extreme views on religion and politics. He died within a few months of his dismissal (1831). But his premature death could not erase the influence of his teaching and his personality from the Hindu College and the student community. Most of the students of the Hindu College favoured a thoroughly liberal outlook in respect of religion, society and politics. They were commonly known as 'Young Bengal'. The most advanced among them were Rasikkrishna Mallik, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Krishnamohan Banerjee and Ramgopal Ghosh. Others particularly notable were Hara Chandra Ghosh, Shib Chandra Deb, Ramtanu Lahiri, Radhanath Sikdar and Pearychand Mitra.

Derozio set up the 'Academic Association' at the Hindu College for discussion of advanced opinions. Here opinions were exchanged on various subjects like religion, society, politics, patriotism, etc. In all these discussions, Western literature, philosophy and history exercised profound influence. Reason was the yardstick of debate in all matters. The Hindu inhibitions about items of food, image worship, the Brahminical domination of society, caste system, the sad plight of womenfolk—all such matters used to draw trenchant criticism. Just to prove that they were free from the traditional inhibitions of Hindu society, some took to eating beef in public almost demonstratively. As a result, conservative Hindus began to harbour the

worst suspicions about 'Young Bengal'. It seemed to them that Hindu religion and society faced danger from the students of the Hindu College. These students were more advanced than Ram Mohan Roy in certain respects in matters relating to religion and social reforms.

Ram Mohan and religious reforms : This crisis of Hindu religion did not escape the attention of Ram Mohan Roy. Even comparatively early in life he had become dissatisfied with traditional Hindu religion. He studied the Arabic language and the Koran at Patna, and coming in contact with Sufi influence, became acquainted with different aspects of Islam. He then visited Tibet and acquired some knowledge of Buddhism. Not even

Quest for know-
ledge about
religion

this could satisfy his thirst for knowledge about religion. He went to Baranasi and studied the Sanskrit language and Hindu philosophy. When he was hardly thirty, he wrote a book

(*Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*) in Arabic and Persian to propagate his views against image-worship and in favour of the concept of one God (monotheism). While he was posted at Rangpur (1809-1814) as an employee of the Company, he held discussions about the views of the different religious communities. At that time, the Brahminical Tantras and the Jain Kalpasutra attracted his particular attention.

After his retirement from the Company's service, Ram Mohan settled permanently in Calcutta in 1815. Almost immediately he established a society known as 'Atmiya Sabha' for holding discussions on religion (1815). Between 1815 and 1819, he published translations of *Vedantasutra* and several *Upanishads* (*Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Mundak*, *Mandukya*). This was his first

Restoration of
ancient religion

attempt to free Hinduism from image-worship and make the concept of one God its foundation. He did not give up Hinduism; rather

he tried to reform it and give it a clearer and purer image by turning the attention of the Hindus to their ancient heritage. There was commotion among the dogmatic Hindus when

Upanishads were brought out in translation and a movement was started in support of the image-worshipping version of the Hindu religion. Budging not an inch from his stand Ram Mohan wrote a book in English on the *Vedanta* (*Abridgement of the Vedanta*) and established an institution known as 'Vedanta College' for teaching courses on Western philosophy and science along with the *Vedanta*. His objective was to establish a rapport between ancient Indian heritage of religion and philosophy and the newly imported Western doctrines.

He had already by this time embarked on his debates with the Christian missionaries on religion. Like other religions, he had studied Christianity also and thought deeply over it. He learnt Greek and Hebrew so that he could read the Bible in original. He was more attracted by the ethics of Christianity than its metaphysics. In 1820, he wrote a book on Christianity. His interpretation of Christianity in this book was subjected to severe criticism by the missionaries of Serampore. He then defended his views in three pamphlets issued for the purpose. He also published a Bengali journal entitled *Brahman Sebadhi* to explain his views. Later, cordial relations developed between Ram Mohan and the Unitarian sect of the Christians.

Against the barrage of criticisms from Hindu dogmatists, Ram Mohan tried to establish that the Vedas did not sanction image-worship and that this form of worship went against the best interests of man both morally and socially. It seemed to him that according to the ancient Hindu scriptures the best form of religion was the worship of the all-pervasive but formless Brahma. He composed a song which started as follows: 'Worship the one who is equally everywhere on water and land and in the sky'. He propagated this view through books and pamphlets. To establish it, he founded the 'Brahmo Sabha' on 20 August 1828. Here worship of one true Brahmo Dharma God was conducted. Brahmins recited the hymns of the Vedas and Upanishads, and religious songs pervaded the air. On 23 January 1830, he established the

'Brahmo Samaj'. Ram Mohan recorded his instructions regarding the objective and method of working of the 'Brahmo Samaj' in a Trust Deed. Its doors were open to 'all sorts of descriptions of people'. The 'Eternal, Unsearchable, and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe' was the only object of worship. There was a total ban on image-worship ('no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait, or the likeness of anything shall be admitted within...'). All sacrificial rites and rituals were prohibited.

The Brahmo Movement : Ram Mohan's Brahmo Dharma was essentially a reformed version of the Hindu religion. The tenets of the ancient scriptures were to him true beyond any doubt; here he did not countenance any application of the yardstick of rationality. He had no desire to establish a religious sect separate from the mainstream of Hindu society.

Ram Mohan started for England on 15 November 1830, within a few months after the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj. There he died nearly three years later on 27 September 1833. He was not spared the time and opportunity to put the nascent Brahmo Samaj on a secure foundation. Ram Chandra Tarkabagish, an associate of Ram Mohan, led the Samaj till 1843. Then the responsibility devolved on Debendra Nath Tagore, the eldest son of Dwarka Nath Tagore, who was a leading merchant and zamindar and a friend of Ram Mohan. Under his stewardship, the Brahmo Samaj became a well-knit organisation. In

the meanwhile, the 'Tattwabodhini Sabha' had been founded in 1839 to conduct religious discussions. This Sabha became the meeting ground of the progressive leaders of the Bengali society. Here came not only such stalwarts of the Brahmo Samaj as Akshay Kumar Dutta and Rajnarayan Basu, but also outstanding personalities like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Iswar Chandra Gupta, Tarachand Chakraborty, Pearychand Mitra, Kaliprasanna Sinha, Ramgopal Ghosh and Rajendra Lal Mitra, who did not belong to the Brahmo Samaj but were equally interested in the cultivation of pure religion and knowledge. The influence of the

Tattwabodhini Sabha was far-reaching. The Sabha brought two messages to the English-educated gentry. First, it was possible to imbibe the best of the West without blindly imitating it in every respect. Secondly, India's ancient religion and culture could be preserved even while rejecting the evil practices and superstitions of the Hindu society. Neither the Hindu dogmatist nor his opposite counterpart—the extreme reformer—was really receptive to such ideas, though the new middle class generally responded. The *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, a Bengali monthly, used to be circulated on behalf of the Sabha. It was edited by Akshay Kumar Dutta.

Mainly due to efforts of Akshay Kumar Dutta, there was a basic change in the Brahmo faith. Ram Mohan regarded the Vedas as infallible; but the intense rationalist that he was, Akshay Kumar could not subscribe to anything not explainable rationally. Debendra Nath Tagore was in partial agreement with Akshay Kumar. Selected sayings from the *Upanishads* relating to the theme of monotheism were accepted as the basis of the Brahmo faith; the assumption that the Vedas in their entirety were infallible was given up. Change in
Brahmo Dharma Regarding social reforms, Akshay Kumar was a radical. He used to write articles in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* in support of remarriage of widows and female education and severely criticising child marriage and polygamy. In these matters, Debendra Nath could not give him his total backing.

In 1858, Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj. Later, his leadership gave a new impetus to the Brahmo movement. But due to his differences with Debendra Nath in many matters the Brahmo Samaj was split into two in 1866. The section loyal to Debendra Nath became known as 'Adi Brahmo Samaj', while the followers of Keshab Chandra formed the 'Indian (Bharatvarshiya) Brahmo Samaj'. Debendra Nath regarded the Brahmo faith as a reformed and improved version of the ancient Hindu religion and considered the Brahmos as Hindus. Keshab Chandra, however, thought of it as a liberal universal creed. He totally rejected the caste system, but

Debendra Nath did not consider that it should be given up as totally as image-worship.

In 1878, differences in many matters between Keshab Chandra and other prominent members of the Brahmo Samaj like Shib-nath Shastri and Ananda Mohan Basu led to a parting of the ways. The latter formed a separate body called the 'Sadharan Brahmo Samaj', as distinct from Keshab Chandra's 'Bharatvar-shiya Brahmo Samaj'. Not long afterwards, the Brahmo movement became weakened and its influence in the religious and social spheres began to wane.

Social reforms : The earliest and the most significant social reform of the nineteenth century was the abolition of the practice of Sati or widow-burning (1829). Normally, the Company's Government hesitated to take any initiative legally and administratively to put a stop to any evil practice current in Hindu society and associated with Hinduism, for the English rulers were afraid that any such intervention in matters of religion would lead to political discontent. A *Pandit* (Sanskrit scholar) in the service of the Supreme Court, Mrityunjay Tarkalankar, opined in 1817 that the scriptures did not enjoin burning of widows; it depended on the widow's own wishes. Though the Governor-General, Lord Hastings, felt the necessity of putting a stop to such a cruel practice, he did not consider it prudent to resort to any administrative measures. The next Governor-General, Lord Amherst, also did not choose to intervene in the matter as he feared that any tampering with religious practices—no matter how much socially and morally desirable—might create discontent among the Hindu Sepoys (soldiers of the armed forces). Ram Mohan Roy had by this time begun his crusade against the burning of widows. He wrote several pamphlets explaining the arguments against the practice. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, banned widow burning and declared it a criminal—and as such punishable offence. Though Ram Mohan was very much opposed to the practice, he could not endorse Bentinck's policy: he did not consider it proper that social reforms should be enforced through laws.

Ram Mohan was very much aware of the wretched position of women in Hindu society. He discussed the sad plight of Hindu widows in his book, *Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Women*. He was a stern critic of Kulinism among the Brahmins, polygamy and child marriage. He was also opposed to the caste system. In his opinion, this system acted as a divisive force among the people, thereby discouraging the growth of patriotism. In all these matters, 'Young Bengal' also cherished similar advanced opinions. However, no further reformist law was enacted while Ram Mohan was alive.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Raja Rajballav failed in his efforts to introduce widow remarriage; dogmatic *Pandits* under the patronage of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of Nadia opposed his move. After the abolition of widow-burning, a movement began in support of remarriage of widows. Christian missionaries and 'Young Bengal' were the main supporters of this move. The movement grew in strength under the leadership of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. In 1853, he wrote a pamphlet explaining the arguments of the scriptures in favour of remarriage of widows. This made the Hindu conservatives react in panic and there was hectic canvassing for and against Vidyasagar's proposal. A petition signed by liberals like Debendra Nath Tagore, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Ramgopal Ghosh, Rajnarayan Basu and many others was submitted to the Legislative Council of the Governor-General, pleading for measures to make remarriage of widows lawful. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, passed a law in 1856; but there was no general acceptance of widow remarriage in Hindu society and the law served little practical purpose.

Remarriage of
widows

Similar appeals to the Governor-General's Legislative Council for legal measures prohibiting Kulinism and polygamy failed to produce any result. After the 'Sepoy Mutiny', the English Government was still more apprehensive about undertaking social reforms through legal changes. Vidyasagar did his best to make the Bengali society sufficiently aware of the harmful effects of polygamy and child marriage.

The attempts at social reforms were closely linked with the Brahmo movement. Akshay Kumar Dutta was a supporter of remarriage of widows and an opponent of child marriage and polygamy. Though conservative in some respects, Debendra

Brahmo contri-
bution to social
reforms

Nath Tagore was in favour of remarriage of widows. Keshab Chandra Sen laid particular emphasis on social reforms. He favoured marriage among the different castes. Such marriages were given sanction by the Civil Marriage Act of 1872 and the minimum age-limit was fixed at 18 for males and 14 for females.

New literature : The last in the line of the medieval poets in Bengal was Bharat Chandra, a member of the court of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of Nadia. There was no other outstanding contributor to Bengali literature in the second half of the eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth century, the

Prose literature missionaries of Serampore and the *Pandits* of Fort William College laid the foundations of Bengali prose. The connecting link between the Serampore Mission and the Fort William College was William Carey. Through the efforts of the Mission, the Bible was translated and scientific articles were published in the Bengali language. The earliest examples of Bengali prose were *Pratapaditya Charitra* (1801) and *Rajabali* (1808), written respectively by Ramram Basu and Mrityunjay Vidyalkar, both of whom were associated with the Fort William College. The medieval poetical works revolved round the theme of the gods and goddesses in all their divinity, while the prose of the new age dealt with the achievements of mere mortals.

The development of prose as a literary form was evident in two respects in the period from 1813 to 1833. In the first place,

Journals and
newspapers :
Ram Mohan

journals and newspapers like *Samachar Darpan*, *Sambad Kaumudi*, *Samachar Chandrika*, *Sambad Prabhakar*, *Jnananwesan* etc. were published within this period. Though the literary worth of articles published in these journals was

negligible as descriptive prose, they were pointers to what lay ahead. Secondly, it was in this period that the Bengali works of Ram Mohan Roy were published. He did not write poetical works or novels. It was to publicise his views on religious and social reforms that he wrote books in different languages (Bengali, Arabic, Persian, English). He was the first to make the Bengali language the vehicle for the discussion of religious and social ideas. Those among his contemporaries who excelled in writing included Kasinath Tarkapanchanan and Bhabanicharan Banerjee.

The greatest among the writers in the period immediately after that of Ram Mohan was Iswar Chandra Gupta. Though not adequately versed in English, he was no stranger to Western ideas.

Iswar Gupta

He was notable among the poets after Bharat Chandra. He was an adept in writing poetry in the payar form. In prose also, he was no mean performer. He was the editor of *Sambad Prabhakar*. All sorts of political, social and economic problems found their place in his editorial columns. Though he was more or less a conservative in his opinions, he had links with the Brahmo Samaj. An opponent of Western and female education, he nevertheless backed the proposal for setting up a University. His books, *Kavijibani*, marked the beginning of critical literature in Bengali.

Among the writers of this period, the names of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, Debendra Nath Tagore and Akshay Kumar Dutta should particularly be mentioned. A notable scholar in Sanskrit, Madan Mohan was also well-versed in English and his views were inspired by Western ideas. Debendra Nath had a simple prose style. His articles used to appear in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*. His 'Autobiography' was the work of the closing period (possibly 1894) of his life. Akshay Kumar had been particularly influenced by such philosophers of the West as James Mill, Jeremy Bentham and Auguste Comte. In his book on the theme of the relationship between human nature and the external world, he pioneered the discussion of scientific topics in the Bengali language. In another important book he discussed the ideas and

practices of different religious groups (*Bharatvarshiya Upasaka Sampradaya*). Both the books were basically translations from works in English. As the editor of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, Akshay Kumar wrote numerous well-informed and critical articles on a variety of subjects.

The prose style which was introduced by the *Pandits* of the Fort William College reached its culmination in the writings of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. He was for a time associated with that College. His books, *Betal Panchabingshati* (1847) and *Sakuntala* (1854), were the first examples of a mature and attractive prose style. His works on the subject of the remarriage of widows show his skill in polemical writing. Though a profound scholar in Sanskrit, he succeeded, to a large extent, in freeing the Bengali language from the oppressive weight of Sanskrit; he avoided the rather needless ornamentation of words and styles derived from Sanskrit. Rabindranath declared that he was the first artist of Bengali prose.

The new literature which was born in Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century was mainly in prose. No prose literature existed till the eighteenth century. Prose was used only in writing letters and preparing legal documents. The use of prose for literary purpose was a distinguishing mark of the nineteenth century. Almost all prose writers from Mrityunjay Vidyalkar to Vidyasagar were good scholars in Sanskrit. In many instances they borrowed ideas and materials from Sanskrit literature, though the influence of Western literature could also be clearly traced. Discussion of problems of everyday importance in the newspapers was a novelty derived from Western influence; newspapers had no place in Sanskrit or medieval Bengali literature. Again, English literature was making its appearance in the Bengali language in the form of translations; for example, mention may be made of Vidyasagar's *Bhrantibilas* (Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors') and *Bangalar Itihas* (translation of Marshman's book on the history

of Bengal) as also the writings of Akshay Kumar Dutta. Bengali literature was growing under the influence, both direct and indirect, of English.

Newspapers : At the beginning of English rule, non-official Englishmen used to publish newspapers in English under their editorship. These newspapers used often to criticize severely the administrative policies of the Company and the activities of its servants. The Company's Government frequently reacted by taking repressive measures against them. This was inevitably countered by the editors with demands for the freedom of expression.

In 1780, James Augustus Hickey began to publish a weekly paper, the *Bengal Gazette* (or *Calcutta General Advertiser*), in Calcutta. Because of his opposition to the Government, his paper was suppressed and he himself put in jail. Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto imposed different types of restrictions on newspapers. Lord Hastings adopted a liberal policy, but his successor Adam, the acting Governor-General, banished James Silk Buckingham, the editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, from India. In 1823, it was enacted that nobody could publish a newspaper without first obtaining permission to do so from the Government.

English
newspapers

By this time, Indian newspapers were also being published. The first issue of the Bengali weekly, *Bengal Gazette*, came out on 15 May 1818. Another weekly, *Samachar Darpan*, was first published on 23 May 1818. Though Marsh-
man, a missionary of Serampore, was formally the editor, it was in reality managed by several Bengali *Pandits*. To counter the liberal views of this weekly on religious and social matters, Hindu dogmatists brought out a paper of their own, *Samachar Chandrika*, on 5 March 1822. That very year Ram Mohan published a weekly in Persian, *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. Ram Mohan and Dwarka Nath Tagore had together sponsored publication of *Bangadut Patrika*. It used to be brought out in four languages (English, Bengali, Persian and Hindi); the editor was an Englishman. In 1853 was published the *Hindoo Patriot*

Indian papers

in English. Under the editorship of Harish Chandra Mukherjee its influence spread far and wide. By demanding political rights for the Indians and justice for the oppressed ryots, the *Hindoo Patriot* ushered in a new age in the world of newspapers.

Ram Mohan had submitted a petition to the Supreme Court claiming freedom of the Press. It is a remarkable document. It has been compared with the *Areopagitica*, the famous prose work of the great English poet, Milton. The Supreme Court having rejected the petition, Ram Mohan preferred an appeal to the King of England. Even this failed to produce any immediate result. However, Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, did not insist on any rigorous application of the Regulation of Freedom of the Press 1823. His successor, the acting Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, introduced an Act in 1835 recognizing freedom of the Press.

Later, at the time of the 'Sepoy Mutiny', freedom of the Press was subjected to extreme curbs by the then Governor-General, Lord Canning.

Ram Mohan Roy laid down two guiding principles for the Press: to disseminate news among the Indian people in such a way that they would be richer by the experience and the society would improve; to bring news to the notice of the rulers in such a way that they would be able correctly to assess the condition and the state of mind of their subjects. Newspapers should broadly act as bridges connecting the rulers and the ruled. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Indian newspapers were to a large extent successful in playing this role. The middle of the century found the newly-awakened political aspirations of the Indians reflected in their newspapers.

Improvement of communications: The building of Railways began in British India at the time of Lord Dalhousie and electric telegraphs were also introduced. These two measures heralded a new age in the system of communications in India. Lord Dalhousie set up a Public Works Department under the Government of India. Lord Bentinck had realised the necessity of a trunk road connecting Calcutta with the North-Western

Provinces (present Uttar Pradesh). Its construction was completed at the time of Dalhousie.

The whole of the Madras Presidency had no roadways fit for movement of carriages at the time British rule was being imposed. The English at first arranged to build roads for the army; then some attention was paid to the roads for the improvement of commerce. Even so, not even in the middle of the nineteenth century could the Company's Government boast of even a thousand miles of roadways through which carriages could move easily at an average speed of six miles per hour.

In the Bombay Presidency and the North-Western Provinces, there were no systematic public works under the Company. In the Punjab, roadways began to be built after the Company had annexed the Sikh Kingdom in 1849.

The river Ganges had a pivotal role in the communication system of North India. In 1780, thirty thousand boatmen used to ply their boats in the Ganges; later, they increased in number. The advent of the Railways ruined the system of ferrying men and goods through the riverways.

The improvement of communications had far-reaching effects. It facilitated trade and commerce and contributed to the economic integration of the country. The Railways connected the interior of the country with the ports and promoted the transit of imports and exports. Secondly, the administrative control of the British rulers was strengthened. The districts were brought into closer contact with the provincial capitals and the imperial capital, and the movement of the Army became easier. Thirdly, the increasing facilities of travel brought the people of different parts of the country closer, improved mutual understanding and created feeling of national unity. Travel made it necessary to relax caste restrictions relating to food and thus promoted the removal of social prejudices.

Growth of political consciousness: In the Mughal period, there were no constitutional methods through which the subjects

could voice their opinions in political matters or claim political rights. The only way out for the aggrieved subjects was to resort to arms. To the rulers, the subjects' discontent was tantamount to revolt and was countered with harsh repressive measures. The problem found a new solution under the English. In their own country, they had introduced constitutional government. Though nobody had thought of introducing such a system in India in the eighteenth century, the Rule of Law had already come into effect from the time of Cornwallis onwards. English law was penetrating the Company's administrative system in diverse ways. One of the basic principles of this law was the recognition of the political and civil liberties of the subject. Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not claim political liberty for the Indians ; but he did ask for civil liberty in the sphere of administration. English journalists in India had claimed freedom of the Press as in England. Ram Mohan also made similar demands on behalf of the Indian Press. Such claims were based on reason, English law and history, and the views of the Western philosophers—not on the conception of the people's right to take to arms. Even when the Company's Government had not conceded the demands, it had not regarded such demands as in themselves punishable offences. Here lies the basic difference between Mughal rule and that of the English.

Political consciousness in modern India owes its origin to two sources : an administrative system based on the Rule of Law ; and knowledge acquired through education in English. The theme of the liberty of the people in the literature, history and philosophy of both England and France attracted the mind, developed the intellectual faculties and rational judgment, and equipped for leadership of the people that particular product of the new education—the educated Bengali. The first leader of the newly educated Bengalis and the precursor of those to come was Ram Mohan Roy. Ram Mohan took up the theme of the political condition in India in various contexts and criticised the Company's administrative

system. His was, however, a constructive approach ; though fully aware of all the drawbacks of the Company's rule, he could not yet conceive of political freedom for India just then in view of the state of affairs in the country. His immediate aims were confined to an improvement of the administrative system and recognition of the civil liberty of the subject.

Ram Mohan was very much interested in the struggles for freedom in various parts of the world. He was jubilant when revolution scored successes in Spain and France. Its failure in the State of Naples in Italy cast a gloom over him. He was a firm believer in the brotherhood of man. In a letter to the Foreign Minister of France he stated that the entire human race belonged to a single large family and that the different races constituted its branches. Ram Mohan's ideas were supported in some particulars by Dwarka Nath Tagore, by the Serampore missionaries as also by the Press.

In politics, Ram Mohan had his differences with 'Young Bengal' ; he was less radical. Derozio's political outlook was a potent influence with the students of the Hindu College. The fervent poem which he composed on his motherland was the first hymn to India in verse. The students of Calcutta 'Young Bengal' arranged celebrations in honour of the July Revolution of 1830 in France. This political awareness of the students survived the untimely death of Derozio. They used to criticise freely various shortcomings of English rule. Rasik Krishna Mallik attacked the police and the judicial systems of Calcutta and expressed the view that the English merchants ruled India with the sole object of piling up their profits. Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee wrote that when the rulers were foreigners they were apt to place their own interests first. In the sphere of economic policy also, the students of the Hindu College had their own opinions. They were opposed to regulation of commerce through Government fiat. Following the father of Political Economy in England, Adam Smith, they supported the doctrine of *laissez faire* in the sphere of commerce. Dakshina-

ranjan Mukherjee was of the opinion that India's poverty was due to foreign rule.

Political organisations : The growth of political consciousness was bound to result in the formation of political organisations. In 1838, a political body was formed in Calcutta with the title of 'Zamindari Association'. Within a very short period there was a change in the title and it came to be known as the 'Landholders Society'. The most prominent among its leaders was Dwaraka Nath Tagore. The Society was, naturally enough, committed to the interests of the landholders. However, it acted as the medium through which a beginning was made of activities aiming at political objectives within the framework of law and the constitution.

In 1839, a friend of Ram Mohan, William Adam, and the well-known humanitarian of England, George Thompson, founded the 'British India Society' in England. In 1842, George Thompson came over to Calcutta from England with Dwaraka Nath Tagore, and on his initiative the 'Bengal British India Society' was formed here the next year. One of its objects was to bring to the notice of the people of England the grievances of the people of India. George Thompson became its President and Pearychand Mitra, the Secretary. Ramgopal Ghosh, Tarachand Chakraborty and Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee were closely associated with the Society. However, zamindars and conservative Hindu leaders like Dwaraka Nath Tagore and Radhakanta Deb did not co-operate with them. The Society acted as the mouthpiece of the affluent middle class though it paid some attention to the interests of the ryots.

A few years afterwards, the need was felt for a new political organisation which would be able to present a united and forceful front against Government policies. In 1851, the 'British India Association' was formed in Calcutta. Its objectives were, 'by every legitimate means', to improve and increase the efficiency of the administrative system, to preserve the 'common interests' of England and India, and to improve the condition of the Indian

people. In actual practice, the Association became virtually an organisation of the zamindars. Radhakanta Deb was its President from 1851 to 1867. Debendra Nath Tagore was the first Secretary. A majority of the members of the Managing Committee all along belonged to the zamindar class. The *Hindoo Patriot*, under the editorship of Harish Chandra Mukherjee, turned into a mouthpiece of the Association.

In 1853, in connection with the discussions on the renewal of the Company's Charter, the Association submitted a detailed petition to the Parliament. It included twenty-one suggestions in all for improvement of the administrative system and formation of a Legislative Council. After the passing of the Charter Act (1853) the Association continued to press its demand for inclusion of Indians in the newly formed Legislative Council.

Though the activities of the Association were virtually limited to Bengal, it looked at things from an all-India perspective. It carried on correspondence with some leading personalities of Madras and Poona. Sometime later, Associations of a similar character were formed in the cities of Poona, Madras and Bombay. Nothing is known about the Association at Poona, but the Madras and Bombay Associations submitted petitions to the Parliament in 1853 in connection with the renewal of the Company's Charter.

The British India Association was not a democratic organisation; it represented the interests of the landholders and the upper middle class. But it anticipated political movement on an all-India basis. As regards method, it introduced in Indian politics the phase of appeals and petitions. Later, the Congress, founded in 1885, subscribed to this principle for a very long period. Its essence lay in the belief that the people of India would get political rights from their British masters if they adopted peaceful means and depended on persuasion, resolutions and petitions.

CHAPTER IV

GROWTH OF THE COMPANY'S EMPIRE

Mysore : In the middle of the eighteenth century Mysore was a small and weak Hindu Kingdom of South India. The Marathas had time and again attacked and ravaged it. In 1761, actual power in Mysore had fallen into the hands of Haidar Ali. In early life, he was just an ordinary soldier. Gradually, taking advantage of internal disorders, he rose to political prominence. The Marathas, busy in North India, ceased to intervene in Mysore. Then Haidar seized all powers from the Hindu King Haidar Ali and the Hindu minister through force and stratagem. Under his rule stretching for two decades, the frontiers of Mysore were extended. He excelled in the spheres of military organisation and leadership in battlefield. The powerful Peshwa, Madhav Rao I, invaded his Kingdom four times but could not inflict any great damage. In his two wars with the English as also in his conflict with the Company's ally, Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, Haidar made a masterly display of his martial skill.

Haidar's first war with the English occurred after the Company had established its sway over Bengal. The war did not lead to any extension of frontiers for any of the parties. However, the English entered into a treaty providing for their help to Haidar should any third party attack Mysore in future. Haidar extracted this promise from the English with an eye to possible Maratha raids in future, but the Company did not make good its promise. Two years after the treaty, when Peshwa Madhav Rao I attacked Mysore, the English did not come to the help of Haidar as promised.

A few years later, England and France were involved in war (1778) in connection with the American War of Independence and the English occupied the French colonies in India. Haidar

was very angry when the English general, Sir Eyre Coote, captured the French port of Mahe situated in the territory of Mysore. He had other reasons also for his displeasure with the English. He had not forgotten the Company's failure to redeem its promise when the Marathas attacked Mysore. The English were already at war with the Marathas (First Anglo-Maratha War) before the capture of Mahe. Haidar sided with the Marathas and joined the war against the English (1779). He occupied Arcot, the capital of the Nawab of Karnataka, Muhammed Ali, the ally of the English (1780). Sometime later, he had to suffer defeat at the hands of Sir Eyre Coote at the battle of Porto Novo (1781). After this, the English made peace with the Marathas (1782), but their war with Mysore continued for two more years. The English were defeated at Tanjore by the army of Mysore (1782). Haidar's spirits rose when the famous French naval commander, De Suffren, appeared in the Indian Ocean with some warships. But Haidar died, leaving the war undecided (1782). His son, Tipu Sultan, took over the reins of the Kingdom. The war with the English continued on the western coast. The English prepared for an attack on Tipu's capital, Seringapatam. At last the treaty of Mangalore brought the war to an end (1784). Both sides restored each other's territorial gains. The Governor of Madras arranged the treaty terms, but the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, was not at all happy about them.

Second Anglo-
Mysore War
(1779—84)

The treaty of Mangalore did not weaken Mysore. In fact, both sides regarded the treaty as a temporary cease-fire. Tipu Sultan, though not far-sighted like Haidar, had inherited some of his qualities. He displayed remarkable administrative and martial skill. Mysore had grown more important politically in South India as a result of the weakening of the Marathas due to internal squabbles. The authorities of the Company regarded Tipu as the most powerful enemy of the English in India.

Tipu Sultan

The third war between Mysore and the Company occurred

during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Cornwallis. To make himself more powerful with foreign aid, Tipu sent envoys to France and Constantinople, the capital of Turkey. Tipu's French connection seemed ominous to the English. Tipu gave an open display of his hostile attitude to the English by attacking Travancore, an ally of the Company. Then Cornwallis began war against him (1790). Both the Peshwa and the Nizam regarded Tipu as their opponent. So they also joined the war against Mysore on the side of the Company.

Tipu could not cope with the combined onslaught of the three enemies. When the English besieged Seringapatam he had to accept defeat and come to terms (1792). He lost possession of half the territory of Mysore; moreover, he bound himself to pay rupees three crores and thirty lakhs in cash as war indemnity. It was arranged to keep his two sons with the English as hostages. The territory ceded by Tipu was divided between the Company, the Peshwa and the Nizam. That part of Mysore which remained under Tipu ceased to have any links with the western coast, so that there was no more any scope for Tipu to make contact with the French by sea. Tipu's truncated Kingdom, surrounded on all sides by the territories of the English, the Marathas and the Nizam, lost its glory and power. In fact, the settlement of Cornwallis was a prelude to the fall of the independent Kingdom of Mysore.

The Company had no authority to extend its territories in India under Pitt's India Act (1784). Cornwallis disobeyed this directive in the case of Mysore. Sir John Shore, who succeeded him as Governor-General, neither engaged in any conflict with the Indian princes nor tried to make territorial gains. This policy of his is known as the 'Policy of Non-intervention'. The next Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, gave up this policy in favour of empire-building. He adopted the principle of making territorial gains through a forward policy of conflict with Mysore and the Maratha Empire.

Third Anglo-
Mysore War
(1790-92)

Shore and
Wellesley

At the time Wellesley arrived in India, England was engaged in the Revolutionary War with France in Europe. Napoleon had become the master of France (1799) sometime after the arrival of Wellesley. Napoleon was pursuing an active policy of establishing French control over Egypt and thereby threatening the British position in India. Wellesley came to the conclusion that for the safety of the British Empire in India it was necessary to make the Indian princes sever their links with the French and be dependent allies of the British. The method adopted by him to make this objective a reality is known as the policy of *Subsidiary Alliance*. Defeated by the Marathas, the weakened Nizam became the Company's subsidiary ally without putting up any resistance (1798). But Tipu Sultan, who did not like to give up his independence, preferred war, courting defeat and losing his life (1799).

Fourth Anglo-
Mysore War
(1799).

After his defeat in war at the time of Cornwallis, Tipu had been increasing his strength in diverse ways. To enlist French help, he became a member of the 'Jacobin Club' of revolutionary France. He sent envoys to French-occupied Mauritius, the French Court at Versailles, Constantinople (the capital of Turkey), Arabia and Kabul. Wellesley pressed him to enter into Subsidiary Alliance with the Company. He did not agree and the Company's army entered Seringapatam. Tipu lost his life while fighting. Parts of his Kingdom came under the Company and the rest was handed over to a person belonging to Mysore's ancient Hindu princely family. This newly-formed Hindu Kingdom, though nominally under an India ruler, was in actual practice totally subordinate to the Company under the terms of the treaty concluded with the new ruler.

In Mysore, there is a saying that while Haidar was born to found an empire, Tipu was born to lose it. In conducting administration, Haidar was usually in favour of the *status quo*, while Tipu was always on the look-out for any novelty or change. The English have made many caustic remarks about Tipu's supposed cruelty and intolerance of other religions, but there is

not much of historical evidence which would go to prove such charges beyond any doubt.

Subsidiary Alliance : What Wellesley aimed at was to create a firm political web through integration of each and every region of North India and the Deccan under his system of Subsidiary Alliance. He held the view that French influence was penetrating into some of the princely courts and armies of India and that this was likely to jeopardize the Company's interests. The French menace Nizam of Hyderabad and Sindhia of Gwalior had made Frenchmen the chiefs of their respective armies. Tipu Sultan was in direct contact with France. The system of Subsidiary Alliance was devised to bring all the regional centres of power in India under the firm grip of the Company. A similar system had already been put into effect in Oudh and Arcot. Wellesley gave it its final shape and, through it, elevated the Company to the status of the sovereign power in India.

Whenever any Indian prince entered into Subsidiary Alliance with the Company, the responsibility for keeping his principality safe from aggression from outside and revolt from within was taken over by the Company. In return for this protection from the Company, the subsidiary ally had to surrender his freedom of action in many ways. He was bound to keep at his own cost a contingent of the Company's army in his own territory. He had to pay a fixed amount annually or—in lieu of that—cede a part of his territory yielding revenues to the Company for meeting the expenses of this contingent. He could not engage the services of any European in his dominions without the consent of the Company. Nor could he engage in war or enter into political relations with any other Indian or foreign power. If he agreed to all these terms, he was left free to administer his kingdom as best as he could; however, even this was nominal as even in internal matters he had to go by the 'advice' of the British Resident. In actual practice, the Governor-General supervised

through the Residents the affairs of the States roped in under the system of Subsidiary Alliance.

Some years earlier, the Nizam of Hyderabad had been defeated by the Marathas in the battle of Khardah or Kurdala (1795). The then Governor General, Sir John Shore, did not extend help to the Nizam at the time in view of his policy of 'Non-intervention'. Thereafter the Nizam appointed French officers to augment his military power and make his army well-trained in French methods of warfare. In order to put an end to French influence at the Nizam's Court, Wellesley entered into two treaties with him System in practices (1798, 1800)—one before the confrontation with Tipu and the other after Tipu's fall. Through the terms of these two treaties, the Nizam was transformed into a subsidiary ally of the Company. He thus surrendered his independence without any fight. He was now free of the terror of Maratha raids (for the Company promised to come to his rescue in the event of aggression from outside).

Taking advantage of succession disputes, Wellesley brought the Maratha Kingdom of Tanjore under the Company's rule (1799). For alleged complicity with Tipu, the Nawab of Arcot was dethroned and his Kingdom brought under the Company (1801). Under a new treaty with the Nawab of Oudh, a large portion of his territory (Gorakhpur, Rohilkhand and parts of the Doab) was brought under the Company's rule and it was arranged to assign a larger number of the Company's sepoy to the Nawab's army (1801).

The greatest success of Wellesley's policy was the surrender of the Peshwa, the head of the Maratha Empire (1802).

The Maratha Empire : In the middle of the eighteenth century, under Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761), the Maratha Empire had reached the peak of its glory both as regards the extent of territory and military power. In the extensive region from the Punjab to Mysore, Maratha influence reigned supreme. But the Marathas came to near-disaster when they were worsted

by Ahmed Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan, in the third battle of Panipat (1761). They had already lost the Punjab. After the battle, their predominance in the Doab, Rajputana and Central India vanished and in the Deccan their opponents became powerful in Hyderabad and Mysore. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao died shortly after this battle. His successor was his minor son, Madhav Rao I (1761-72). The guardian of the new Peshwa was his uncle, Raghunath Rao, who conspired with the Nizam against his brother's son because he had ambitions of his own, and ultimately took the field against his nephew openly. Madhav Rao somehow brought him under control, but his untimely death (1772) paved the way for Raghunath Rao to give free rein to his wild ambitions and thus bring the Maratha Empire to disaster.

On the face of it, it would seem that the defeat at Panipat was the beginning of the end of the Maratha Empire. But the Marathas succeeded in absorbing this terrible blow and almost within a space of a few years became a mighty force again. For this resurgence, the main credit should go to Madhav Rao I. He defeated the Nizam and reduced Haidar Ali's power by attacking his Kingdom four times in succession. The expeditions sent by him to North India led to the recovery of Malwa and Bundelkhand, extraction of tribute from the Rajput princes, reduction in strength of the Jats and the Rohillas, and capture of Delhi. Shah Alam II, the Mughal Emperor, was then living at Allahabad as a pensioner of the English. He switched over to the protection of the Marathas and with their help returned to the Mughal capital, Delhi (1772). Just a few months later, the young Peshwa met a premature death. Then the Maratha army retreated from the north of India to the south. As a result, the steps taken for the recovery of the pre-eminent position in North India came to nought. The untimely death of Peshwa Madhav Rao was more damaging in its effects on the Marathas than the rout at Panipat. The Maratha influence in North India was again at a low ebb. In the South, Haidar Ali gained in strength. Internal feuds

Resurgent
Marathas

divided the Marathas into two hostile camps and got them involved in war with the English.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82): After the premature death of Madhav Rao I, his younger brother, Narayan Rao, became the new Peshwa (1772). Within a very short period, he was assassinated as a result of the conspiracy of his uncle, Raghunath Rao (1774). After this tragic event, Raghunath Rao himself became the Peshwa (1773-74). A few months afterwards, the widow of Narayan Rao gave birth to a

Causes

son, who is known Madhav Rao II or Madhav Rao Narayan. The Maratha chieftains opposed to Raghunath Rao proclaimed the newly-born infant as the lawful Peshwa and arranged to rule in his name. The most eminent and gifted among these Maratha chiefs was Nana Fadnavis. During the Peshwaship of Madhav Rao II (1774-96), it was he who was the real power behind the throne. In the refinements of diplomacy, he was second to none in the Maratha Empire.

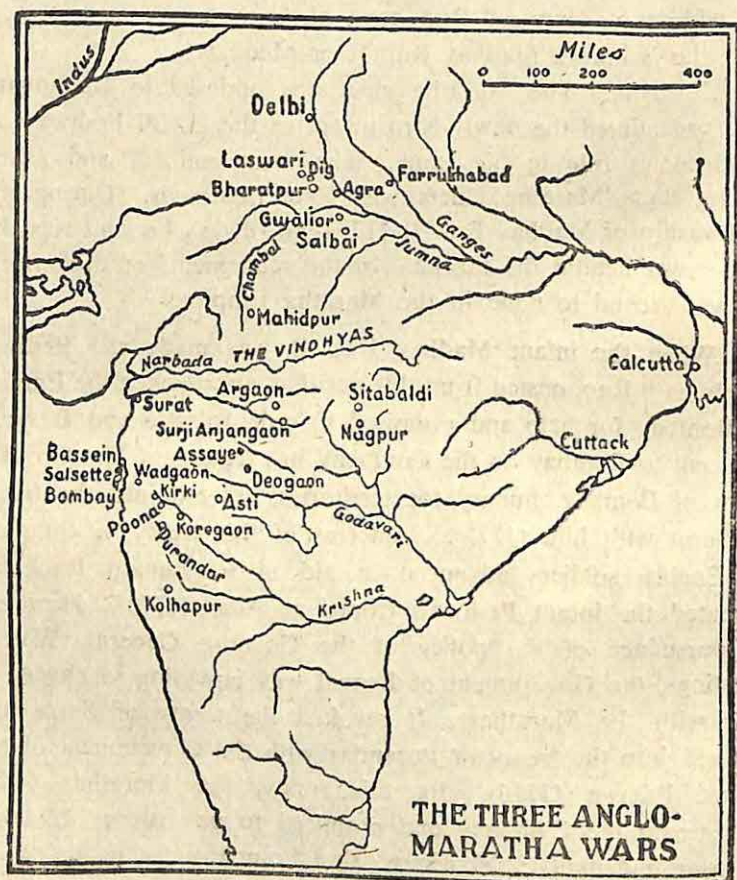
When the infant Madhav Rao II was made the Peshwa, Raghunath Rao, ousted from this position, approached the English in Bombay for help and promised to cede Salsette and Bassein, adjacent to Bombay, to the Company in exchange. The Government of Bombay, hungry for territories, entered into the treaty of Surat with him (1775). In terms of this treaty, a company of English soldiers advanced in aid of Raghunath Rao and defeated the infant Peshwa's troops at Adas (1775). However, in pursuance of the policy of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, the Government of Bengal was unwilling to engage in war with the Marathas. It revoked the treaty of Surat and entered into the treaty of Purandar with the Government of the infant Peshwa (1776). By this treaty, the Marathas ceded Salsette to the Company and promised to pay rupees 12 lakhs as war indemnity; in return, the Company

English policy

promised not to side with Raghunath Rao.

But the Government of Bombay, ignoring the treaty of Purandar, gave asylum to Raghunath at Surat. Sometime later, a despatch from the Company's Board of Directors in England

reached India, approving the treaty of Surat. The treaty of Purandar was accordingly rescinded. The Government of Bombay now undertook the active policy of ousting Nana Fadnavis and his associates and installing Raghunath Rao as the guardian of the infant Peshwa. Warren Hastings and the Government of Bengal were left with no alternative but to back Raghunath Rao.



A detachment of soldiers sent by the Government of Bombay advanced towards the Peshwa's capital, Poona, but had to retreat

in the face of stiff Maratha resistance and was compelled to sign a humiliating treaty at a place called Wadgaon. Alarmed at this reverse of the English, Raghunath Rao sought
 War
 refuge with the Maratha Chieftain of Central India, Mahadji Sindhia. Warren Hastings, refusing to abide by the terms of the treaty of Wadgaon, continued the war. An army contingent sent by him marched across the whole of North India and reached Surat under the command of General Goddard. This successful advance from one side to another of the vast Indian sub-continent increased the military prestige of the English. Raghunath Rao left the protection of Mahadji Sindhia and sought that of Goddard. Goddard made an ally of another Maratha chieftain, Gaikwad of Baroda, and captured Ahmedabad. Then he advanced from Gujrat to Maharashtra. Bassein fell to him and the Marathas were defeated in the Konkan region ; but Goddard in his turn met with reverse on the way to Poona (1781).

Meanwhile, the Nizam and Haidar Ali had joined hands with the Marathas against the English, who now faced attacks from all sides. Hastings, in a diplomatic manoeuvre, neutralized the Maratha chief of Nagpur, Bhonsle. In Central India, the Rana of Gohad joined the English and helped the English general, Popham, who captured the impregnable fortress of Gwalior (1780). Another general, Camac, endangered the position of Mahadji Sindhia in Central India. Sindhia was then compelled to come to a compromise with the English and made a treaty with them (1781). After some time, through his mediation, the Government of this infant Peshwa entered in the treaty of Salbai with the Company (1782).

In terms of the treaty, Salsette remained under the Company's occupation, but the places which had come under the English after the treaty of Purandar were
 Treaty
 restored to the Peshwa. Raghunath Rao was given a pension. The Company recognised Madhav Rao II as the Peshwa. Hastings had shown extraordinary firmness and competence in conducting the war. The

conflict did not destroy the Maratha power : but it reduced the Marathas to such a position that the English also did not have to wage war against them for the next twenty years.

Changes in the Maratha Empire : For a variety of reasons, there had been a fundamental change in the Maratha Empire after the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I. Till his time, the regional Maratha Chiefs were actually subordinate to the Peshwa ; their authority was quite limited in scope. Though the Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur, Sindhia of Gwalior, Holkar of Indore and Gaikwad of Baroda were all of them practically independent in matters relating to their own principalities, in the case of bigger issues pertaining to the Maratha Empire as a whole they bowed to the authority of the Peshwa. However, in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, they gained the status and powers of virtually independent potentates. The Empire was weakend by the slackening of the central authority. During the first few years of the nineteenth century, the Maratha Empire split up into several independent and separate kingdoms as a result of this weakness and the conflict with the English. Though the principal Maratha Chiefs had responded to the summons of the Peshwa at the time of the war with the Nizam (1795), a few years afterwards, at the time of Lord Wellesley, they could not present a common front against the English.

After the First Anglo-Maratha War, the Maratha Empire was ably led by Nana Fadnavis, that competent minister of Madhav Rao II, and Mahadji Sindhia, the ruler of extensive areas in North India and the protector of the nominal Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam. An English historian says about Nana Fadnavis that "the vigour of his judgment, the fertility of his expedients, the extent of his influence and the combination of instruments which he called into action surprised all India". According to the same authority, Mahadji Sindhia was "a man of great political sagacity, of deep artifice, of restless ambition and of implacable revenge".

Peshwa Baji Rao II (1796-1818) : In 1794, when Mahadji Sindhia died, Daulat Rao Sindhia, an inexperienced, short-sighted,

arrogant youth, became his successor. The next year, Ahalya Bai, the deeply religious and efficient ruler of the Holkar State, passed away. Two years later (1797) her successor, Tukoji Holkar, also died. After a chaotic state of affairs for some time, one of Tukoji's sons, Yaswant Rao Holkar, seized power in the Holkar State. Meanwhile, a sudden accident had resulted in the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao II (1796) and the throne of the Peshwa had gone to Baji Rao II, the son of Raghunath Rao. The new Peshwa was weak, given to duplicity, and traitorous. In 1800, Nana Fadnavis died. It was an irony of fate that the leadership of the Maratha Empire now devolved on three individuals (Baji Rao II, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Yaswant Rao Holkar) who were absolutely devoid of integrity of character, far-sightedness and political wisdom. Lord Wellesley naturally took advantage of this ill-luck of the Marathas.

After the death of Nana Fadnavis, Daulat Rao Sindhia and Yaswant Rao Holkar were locked in a grim struggle for the pre-eminent position at the Peshwa's court at Poona. In 1802, at the battle of Poona, the combined armies of the Peshwa and Sindhia were defeated by Holkar. Baji Rao II fled from Poona and took refuge with the English at Bassein. The Nizam had already submitted to the policy of Subsidiary Alliance introduced by Lord Wellesley, and Tipu Sultan had paid the price for his defiance of this policy when he had lost his battle with the English and his life too. The timorous Peshwa, afraid of Holkar, now entered into the treaty of Bassein (1802) with the Company on the basis of the policy of Subsidiary Alliance. A contingent of English troops was arranged to be stationed permanently in the Peshwa's territory. The Peshwa ceded a portion of his territory with an annual income of 26 lakhs of rupees to the Company for the upkeep of this contingent. The Peshwa also agreed to abide by the Company's arbitration in his disputes with the Nizam and Gaikwad. His foreign policy was placed under the Company's control. In this way Baji Rao purchased security at the price of independence. The Company's army reinstalled him as the Peshwa at Poona.

Second Anglo Maratha War (1803-6) : The treaty of Bassein marked the greatest success of Wellesley's diplomacy. He had three objectives : (1) Whatever remained of the elements of Maratha political integration would have to be destroyed once for all. (2) The Peshwa as well as the other Maratha Chiefs (Bhonsle, Sindhia, Holkar, Gaikwad) would have to be manoeuvred into a position in which each of them became an independent and separate power, so that the Peshwa could not play the role of an integrating force through his overlordship over the whole of the Maratha Empire. (3) The political claims which the Marathas made over the other Indian princes, *e.g.*, the Rajput princes, would have to be put an end to. Already before this Gaikwad had put on himself the fetters of Subsidiary Alliance. As the Peshwa also followed suit, the Maratha Confederacy was practically broken up. Wellesley had hoped that through mutual differences and jealousies, Bhonsle, Sindhia and Holkar would one and all choose to come into the fold of Subsidiary Alliance.

Aims of
Wellesley

Though he considered it possible that such a consummation would come without war, he did not entirely rule out the possibility of resort

to arms.

The hopes of Wellesley were belied. Though the two mediocrities, the Peshwa and Gaikwad, played safe by submitting to the Company, other Maratha Chiefs were not ready to part with their freedom. In 1803, Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur and

War of Bhonsle
and Sindhia

Daulat Rao Sindhia jointly declared war against the Company. Yaswant Rao Holkar, instead of immediately joining forces with them, chose

to sit on the fence and observe how things turned out. Thus even in the hour of their gravest crisis, the three Maratha Chiefs could not present a united front.

Arthur Wellesley, the brother of the Governor-General, afterwards known as the Duke of Wellington in recognition of his victory over Napoleon in Europe later on in his career, now became the chief of the Company's army in South India. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Lake, took charge of conducting the war in North

India. Sindhia's French officers, influenced by the English, deserted him. As a result, Sindhia was considerably weakened militarily.

In 1803, the war came to an end just within a few months. One English historian has written, "The rapidity of the conquests and the speedy termination of the war surprised all India." Though Bhonsle and Sindhia were fighting together, they did not fully co-operate with each other in the field. Their combined forces were defeated by Wellesley at the battle of Assaye. Burhanpur and Asirgarh fell into Wellesley's hands, who also routed Bhonsle's forces at the battle of Argaon.

Lord Lake scored great success by attacking Sindhia's territories in North India. The treachery of Sindhia's French officers, Perron and Bourquin, was particularly helpful to the English. Aligarh and Delhi were captured by the English. Though fighting extremely well, Sindhia's forces were still the losers at the battle of Laswari. Thus in North India Sindhia's army was destroyed and his power of resistance was broken.

After his defeat at Argaon, Bhonsle withdrew from the war in terms of the treaty of Deogaon (1803). An extensive part of his kingdom (Orissa, *i.e.*, Cuttack and Balasore and a portion of Madhya Pradesh) came under the Company's rule. By the treaty of Surji Arjangaon (1803), Sindhia recognised the Company's authority over the Ganges-Jumna Doab and gave up his rights in respect of Ahmadnagar and Broach district. The nominal Mughal Emperor, Shah

Treaty

Alam, had so long been under the protection of Sindhia. Delhi having fallen to the Company, Shah Alam was now made a protegee of the English. A little later, Sindhia entered into another treaty with the Company at Burhanpur (1804). He agreed to keep a contingent of English troops for the security of his kingdom, but it was arranged that the contingent would be stationed outside his state in British territory (the system of Subsidiary Alliance provided for stationing of the Company's troops inside the territory of the 'ally').

The poverty of diplomatic skill among the Maratha Chiefs and some inherent weaknesses of the Maratha armies made

such military disasters inevitable. Following age-old tradition, the infantry was given more importance than the cavalry. In the opinion of a contemporary English writer, the Maratha soldiers were so lacking in discipline, armour and outfits that it seemed as if they were simply offered for slaughter. It was not very difficult for the well-trained and well-armed British troops and sepoys to rout their basically weak Maratha counterparts.

After the disastrous defeats of Sindhia and Bhonsle, Yaswant Rao Holkar took the field against the English all alone. Unlike Sindhia, he refused to adopt a new strategy and continued the Holkar's war old Maratha practice of plunder. In a mountain pass near Kotah in Rajputana, he trapped the English General, Monson, who had to beat a hasty retreat. Holkar then mounted an attack on Delhi, but even with the help of the Jat Raja of Bharatpur he could not occupy Delhi. Later, he was defeated at Dig and Farrukhabad and a contingent of English troops sent from Bombay captured his capital, Indore (1804). Holkar became a fugitive in the Punjab, where the head of the newly founded Sikh Kingdom, Ranjit Singh, refused to come to his help.

As the authorities of the Company in England did not like Wellesley's expansionist policy, he resigned before the war with Holkar had come to a conclusion (1805). The Company gave up the policy of acquiring territories in India through war. To implement this new policy, Lord Cornwallis again came over as the Governor-General, but died within a few weeks. Then the acting Governor-General, Sir George Barlow, made peace with Holkar (1806). The resultant treaty did not lead to any great diminution of the territory and political influence of the vanquished Holkar. This was due to the Company's change of policy, *i.e.*, withdrawal from Wellesley's policy of imperialistic expansion.

Though the Second Anglo-Maratha War reduced the strength of the Marathas, no other Maratha rulers excepting the Peshwa and Gaikwad were compelled to submit totally to the

Company's system of Subsidiary Alliance. Under instructions from the Company's authorities, Sir George Barlow (1805-1807) and his successor as Governor-General, Lord Minto (1807-1813), abandoned Wellesley's policy of 'converting the British Empire in India to the British Empire of India' and followed the 'policy of Non-intervention' of Sir John Shore.

During their tenure, no attempt was made to encroach on the independence of the Maratha Chiefs, nor were any steps taken to lessen the influence of Sindhia and Holkar over the Rajput princes.

Revival of
policy of Non-
intervention

Third Aglo-Maratha War (1817-18): Some years after his treaty with the English, Yaswant Rao Holkar turned insane; he died in 1811. Lacking an able Chief, anarchy reigned in Holkar's dominions and Amir Khan, a turbulent Pathan Chief, became the *de facto* ruler. He commanded a large army consisting mainly of Pindaris. With the help of this army, he collected large sums of money from the Rajput princes, subdued the Muslim principality of Bhopal and invaded Berar, which was under the rule of Bhonsle.

After he had concluded peace with the English, Daulat Rao Sindhia made Central India and Rajputana his area of operations. It became his major aim to collect money through military pressure over the princes of these two regions. But his financial difficulties were not removed.

Peshwa Baji Rao II came into disfavour with his subjects for his oppressive rule. His relations with some Maratha Chiefs had become bitter for a number of reasons. Break-down of order within the Peshwa's Kingdom was averted through the mediation of the English Resident, Elphinstone.

Lord Hastings (1813-23), Minto's successor as Governor-General, faced new problems in respect of the Marathas. In order to be free from the Company's tutelage, the restless Peshwa began to conspire secretly against the English with Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle. Gaikwad's *Dewan*, Gangadhar

Sastri, who had come to Poona on official business, was murdered there. Most probably, a personal favourite of the Peshwa was responsible for this outrage.

New British treaty with Peshwa
All these factors made Lord Hastings compel the Peshwa to sign a new treaty in 1817. By this treaty, Baji Rao had to (1) give up his position as the head of the Maratha Empire; (2) cease entering into negotiations with any other ruler except through the English Resident; (3) surrender all his political rights over princes in North India to the Company; and (4) cede a piece of territory with an annual income of rupees 34 lakhs to the Company for meeting the expenses of British military arrangements for the security of his Kingdom. All these terms were naturally very unpalatable to the Peshwa. He accepted with the greatest reluctance the loss of his authority over the Maratha vassal Chiefs.

Almost at the same time, succession disputes arose in the Bhonsle Kingdom. Lord Hastings entered into a new treaty (1816) with the Raja's deputy, Appa Saheb. The Bhonsle Kingdom was brought fully under the system of Subsidiary Alliance and thus lost its independence totally.

Meanwhile, the Pindari War (1817-18) had begun. The Pindaris were 'a class of the lowest free-booters'. They had links with the Maratha armies for a long time. At this time, they were led by adventurers like Karim Khan, Chitu and Dost Muhammad. These leaders generally operated under the control of the Pathan Chief, Amir Khan. The Pindaris used to raid different places in Central India and Rajputana for plunder; the territories of the Peshwa and the

Pindari War
(1817)

Nizam did not escape their depredations. So long as they did not raid the Company's territories, the English authorities were not very much concerned about them. When in 1816 they began to devastate the Company's territories in the north, Lord Hastings decided to crush them. A large English army marched against them. After the Pindari menace was put an end to, two of their leaders, Karim Khan and Amir Khan, were granted two small estates. However,

Chitu did not surrender and fell prey to a tiger while fleeing. To enlist the co-operation of Daulat Rao Sindhia in the move against the Pindaris, Lord Hastings signed a new treaty with him in 1817. By this treaty Sindhia renounced all his claims in respect of the Rajput princes. The way was now clear for the establishment of the Company's authority over Rajputana.

The war with the Pindaris was ultimately transformed into a general war against the Maratha Chiefs. War with Peshwa Baji Rao II had the British Residency Peshwa at Poona burnt down and attacked the British camp at nearby Kirki (1817). When fresh reinforcements arrived, the British again occupied Poona. Sometime later, the Peshwa's forces made a vain attempt to capture Koregaon and were defeated in the battle of Ashti (1818). Baji Rao, now facing an absolutely desperate situation, surrendered to the British (1818).

The Peshwa's declaration of war had acted as a signal to two other Maratha powers. Bhonsle's army attacked Wars of Bhonsle the English but was defeated in the two battles and Holkar of Sitabaldi and Nagpur (1817). Appa Saheb fled first to the Punjab and then to Rajputana for refuge. Holkar's army also could not stand up to the English at Mahidpur (1817).

The Marathas had now no alternative but to face the political consequences of their military defeats. A new treaty was made with Holkar (1818). He gave up all his claims over the Rajput States and surrendered his territory Consequences in the South. A contingent of English troops of War was arranged to be stationed within his dominions. He promised not to enter into negotiations with any other power except through the English Resident. A member of the Bhonsle dynasty was placed on the throne. However, as a measure of punishment for the activities of Appa Saheb, a portion of the Bhonsle territories (the Saugar and Narbada regions in Central India) was brought under the Company's administration.

The Kingdom of the defeated Peshwa was made a part of the Company's Empire, excepting a small portion which was

given to Pratap Singh, a descendant of Shivaji. This principality came to be known as Satara. From the middle Fate of Peshwa of the eighteenth century, the descendants of Shivaji had been living a life of confinement in the fort of Satara. Baji Rao was given an annual pension of rupees eight lakhs and was confined at Bithur near Kanpur. There he died in 1853. Lord Dalhousie refused pension to his adopted son, Nana Saheb. Later, Nana Saheb became a leader of the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

There was a deep political motivation behind this harsh treatment of the Peshwa. Though Baji Rao had formally renounced his traditional position as the head of the Maratha Empire by the treaty of 1817, the memory of Maharashtra's past political glory was inextricably bound up with the dynasty of the Peshwas. It was, therefore, in the Company's interest to so arrange matters that the Marathas would never again be able to rally round the historic dynasty. To ensure that the Peshwa could never again play any role as a unifying force, his title as also his authority were abolished for ever. Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaikwad—each of them began to rule his own dominions in isolation as the Company's subsidiary ally. In the process, they lost the power and the opportunity to confront the English jointly.

Rajputana : In the closing half of the eighteenth century, most of the States in Rajputana had suffered severely due to Maratha inroads and depredations. The Rajput princes could not resist the Marathas owing to their own weakness and mutual enmities. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, they became eager for treaties of friendship with the Company. Though Lord Wellesley had made treaties with Jaipur and Jodhpur, these had not been made effective. Lord Minto's 'policy of Non-intervention' had pushed the Rajput States into the clutches of Sindhia and the Pathan Chief Amir Khan. Lord Hastings changed this policy in connection with the Pindari War, for it would have been very difficult to wipe out these marauders without the co-operation of the Rajput princes. Sindhia and Holkar having already given up all their claims over the

Rajput States by the treaties respectively of 1817 and 1818, Lord Hastings had now a free hand in his dealings with Rajputana. Between 1817 and 1823, all Rajput States, big and small, joined the Company's system of Subsidiary Alliance. As a result, the Company became the supreme authority over the whole of Rajputana. The Ajmer-Merwara region was brought under the Company's direct rule.

Central India : During this time, Bhopal, Dhar and Dewas as well as other States of Central India also submitted to the system of Subsidiary Alliance. Bundelkhand, which formerly belonged to the Peshwa, was also brought under the Company's dominance. All these political changes in Rajputana and Central India were closely linked with the Third Anglo-Maratha War. Had the Peshwa not fallen and the other Maratha Chiefs become the Company's subsidiary allies, the areas under their influence would not have so easily come under the Company's hegemony.

War with Nepal (1814-16) : The first war fought in respect of the borders of India during the British period was that with Nepal. The Gurkhas at Nepal controlled the entire territory in the Himalayan foothills from the Tista in the east to the Sutlej in the west. When in 1801 Wellesley wrested the district of Gorakhpur from the Nawab of Oudh, the northern frontiers of the Company's territories touched the southern frontiers of the Gurkha Kingdom. Ill-defined frontiers and the aggressive attitude of the Gurkhas made frontier clashes inevitable. In 1814, Gurkha raids on some police stations in the Company's territory led to war.

The physical features of the terrain where the fighting began were especially favourable to the Gurkhas. After some reverses, General Ochterlony seized the strong fort of Malaon (1815). Sometime later, he advanced into the interior of Nepal and won a victory at Makwanpur (1816). The war was brought to an end by the treaty of Sagauli. The Gurkhas ceded the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon and a large slice of the *terai* to the Company, renounced their claims to Sikkim, and agreed to receive an English Resident at their capital, Katmandu. The famous hill

stations such as Simla, Mussoorie, Almora, Naini Tal are all situated in the territory taken from the Gurkhas. Nepal never failed to abide by the treaty of Sagauli.

In 1817, by an agreement with Sikkim the Company gave the State a portion of the *terai* taken from the Gurkhas.

Bhutan War : In 1865, during the Governor-Generalship of Sir John Lawrence, frontier disputes resulted in a war with Bhutan. The Bhutanese gave away a large portion of the Dooars region to the Company in exchange for a fixed annual tribute.

First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) : In the middle of the eighteenth century, an adventurous local chief known as Alaungpaya founded a powerful royal dynasty in Burma. The whole of Burma was united under his rule. One of his descendants,

Arakan Bodawpaya (1782-1819), conquered Arakan

(1784-85). For many centuries Arakan had been an independent kingdom, with intimate political and cultural relations with Bengal. When Arakan fell to the Burmese, its people, the *Mags*, in order to escape the tyranny of their new rulers, began to take refuge in the British district of Chittagong in Bengal (now in Bangladesh). The Burmese were furious with their fleeing subjects and, pursuing them, tried to cross the frontiers repeatedly during the period from 1786 to 1824. These troubles on the Chittagong-Arakan borders reached the breaking point in 1823. The Burmese occupied the small island of Shahpuri on the border of Chittagong in the Company's territory.

Meanwhile, clashes had already begun between the Burmese and the English in the Assam region. In the Brahmaputra valley, the Kingdom of the Ahoms had been weakened by the incompetence of the rulers and internal disturbances. Taking advantage of this, the Burmese established their dominance over the Ahom Kingdom and adopted a policy of large-scale devastation.

Assam The effects of these ravages were felt in the

north-east of Bengal in the Goalpara and Rangpur regions. The Burmese began to plunder the villages in these areas. The Company's Government was apprehensive that the Burmese might advance up to Dacca by water-ways and

extend their depredations to large areas in East Bengal. Again, the Burmese, by dominating the independent hill-state of Manipur, were endangering the small independent states of Cachar and Jaintia as also the Company-ruled district of Sylhet in Bengal.

At the beginning of 1824, clashes occurred near Sylhet; efforts at a settlement of the issue of Shahpuri failed. Then Lord Amherst, the Governor-General, declared war (1824). After two years, the war came to an end with the treaty of Yandabo (1826). There were four theatres of war—Assam, Arakan, the lower valley of the Irrawaddy, and Tenasserim. The British army advanced up to the region near the capital of Burma, Amarapura.

The defeated King of Burma renounced all claims on the Ahom Kingdom as also on Manipur, Cachar and Jaintia and surrendered Arakan and Tenasserim to the Company. He promised to pay a war indemnity of rupees one crore, and agreed to receive a British envoy at his court. A portion of the Brahmaputra valley was placed under the rule of the Company and the other portion was placed under an Ahom prince. Some years afterwards (1838), this principality was brought under the Company's direct rule. Manipur was given to a member of its royal family, though it remained within the sphere of the Company's suzerainty. Cachar and Jaintia were restored to their old rulers who had already submitted to British suzerainty, but within a few years both came under the Company's rule. Thus, as a result of the First Anglo-Burmese War, Assam and the adjoining states and two of the outer provinces of Burma—Arakan and Tenasserim—formed parts of the Company's Empire.

Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852): In terms of the treaty of Yandabo, a British envoy was sent to Burma. He entered into a commercial treaty with the Burmese King (1826); this was of some advantage to the British traders in their commercial dealings with Burma. The Burmese King was extremely unwilling to accommodate a permanent British envoy in his

England's prestige in the East was to be kept intact. The war was over within a few months. The British army occupied Pegu, a province in the southern part of Burma. As the Burmese King did not agree to sign any treaty, Dalhousie issued a proclamation making Pegu a part of the Company's Empire. Several years later, the three provinces of Arakan, Tenasserim and Pegu were merged into a single province under a Chief Commissioner and named 'British Burma' (1862).

Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885): After the Second Anglo-Burmese War, only the north of Burma (Upper Burma) remained under the rule of the Alaungpaya dynasty. Though King Mindon (1852-78) was eager to recover Pegu, he was at the same time careful not to alienate the British. He tried to establish political relations with different European powers, particularly France. His principal objective was to free his Kingdom from British political influence. He gave various trading facilities to British subjects through two commercial treaties (1862, 1867). Though he admitted a British Agent in his capital, Mandalay, he refused to continue official relations with him towards the close of his reign.

After the death of Mindon, his son, Thibaw, ascended the throne. He was a mere youth, totally inexperienced in political and administrative matters. In Rangoon and England, British traders raised demands that either Thibaw's Kingdom be brought outright under the Company's rule, or at the least the control of the Government of India over the Kingdom be tightened so as to safeguard British commercial interests. Just in this situation, Thibaw invited disaster by his attempts at opening political and commercial relations with France.

Thibaw's Kingdom was, geographically, adjacent to British Burma and Assam, two of the Company's provinces. England, therefore, could not be expected to countenance any increase in French influence in North Burma. She had already been alarmed by the consolidation of the French position in Indo-China. To allow the French any foothold in North Burma

British
fear of the
French

was contrary to British interests, Thibaw was not well-versed in the intricacies of international relations. He sent an envoy to France to conclude a commercial treaty (1884). Later, he allowed mining rights to a French trading concern.

When Thibaw's partiality for France was becoming clearly evident, a dispute arose between a British trading Company (Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation) and the Burmese Government over the trade in timber. Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, sided with the Corporation, and when

Fall of Thibaw Thibaw refused to settle the dispute on his terms, sent an army to North Burma (1885). Mandalay fell almost without a single shot being fired; Thibaw surrendered and was sent a prisoner to India. North Burma became British (1886). Thibaw's Kingdom was merged with 'British Burma' and a new province named 'Burma' was created.

Rise of the Sikh Kingdom : After the death of their tenth and last Guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708, the Sikhs had for half a century offered armed resistance to the Mughal Government. They had to undergo unspeakable atrocities for trying to preserve their religion and community intact. However, during this period, they had not been able to establish their rule in any part of the Punjab.

In 1752, the feeble Mughal Emperor, Ahmad Shah, allowed Ahmad Shah Abdali, the ruler of Kabul, to establish his dominance over north-western India, including the Punjab. Then the Sikhs began their freedom struggle against Abdali, who invaded the Punjab time and again and tried to subdue the Sikhs militarily. Though successful at the early stages, ultimately he failed. In extensive areas of the Punjab, the Sikhs made themselves independent politically. Self-sacrifice, love of religion and bravery crowned the Sikhs with victory.

Though the Sikhs ruled in the Punjab in the latter half of the eighteenth century, they were not able to establish a unified Sikh State. They were divided into twelve *Misls* or confederacies; the Chief of each

Misl ruled over a piece of territory. After the death of Abdali, the danger of Afghan invasion receded; then the chiefs of the *Misls* began in-fighting. This state of disunity in the Punjab came to an end in the early years of the nineteenth century. Ranjit Singh, the chief of one of the *Misls*, conquered the territories of the majority of the *Misls* and founded a powerful Sikh State. Due to the opposition of the Company, he could not bring the Sikh territories south of the Sutlej under his flag.

Ranjit Singh (1780-1839): Ranjit Singh was born in 1780. His father was the Chief of a *Misl* and the ruler of a small principality. Though illiterate, Ranjit Singh was an extraordinary genius both militarily and politically. He founded a large and powerful kingdom, taking advantage of the weaknesses of Afghan rulers of Kabul and the disunity of the Sikh *Misl* Chiefs. He will for ever remain a memorable figure in Indian history.

In 1790, Ranjit Singh's father died. In 1799, Ranjit Singh captured Lahore from the Afghan ruler of Kabul. Possession of the most important political centre of the Punjab increased his power and raised his status. In 1802, he crossed over the Sutlej to East Punjab with his army and captured a major town, Ludhiana. The Cis-Sutlej Sikh States approached the British for protection against this danger from Ranjit Singh. In 1805, Amritsar, the Sikh centre of pilgrimage, was brought under his occupation. Till 1823, he captured the territories of the different Sikh *Misls*. This brought to an end the phase of small principalities in Western Punjab, and a new phase of Sikh history began with a centralised, well-knit and powerful Kingdom.

But Ranjit Singh met with opposition from the English when he tried to bring the Sikh *Misls* on the other side of the Sutlej under his occupation. The Governor-General, Lord Minto, sent an envoy, Charles Metcalfe, to Ranjit Singh with the demand that he confine his political activities to his side of the Sutlej. Ranjit Singh acceded to the demand, for he was not powerful enough to challenge the British military power, and the Sikh States like

Treaty of
Amritsar

Patiala on the other side of the Sutlej were not prepared to accept his authority. In 1809, the treaty of Amritsar made the Sutlej the boundary of his Kingdom, though he was free to enlarge his domains in the west and the north.

Ranjit Singh wrested the extensive north-west frontier region from Kashmir to Peshawar from the Afghan rulers of Kabul. The Hill States of the Punjab lying on the other side of the Sutlej remained under his occupation. Had the Company not stood in his way, the lower valley of the Indus (*i.e.*, the province of Sind) which was under the rule of Muslim Amirs would have fallen into his hands; but the Company did not like that his sway should extend right up to the sea. The extensive region from the Sutlej to the Khyber pass in the west and from a small portion of Tibet in the north to the Punjab-Sind frontier in the south became part of his Kingdom. It was the power of Ranjit Singh which saved Kashmir and the north-western region from becoming permanent parts of the Afghan Kingdom.

The friendship with Ranjit Singh allowed the Company to extend its influence south of the Sutlej; the areas between the Jumna and the Sutlej came under the domination of the English. The Sikh States of this region (Patiala, Nabhs, etc.) turned into British 'protectorates'.

The British connection could not persuade Ranjit Singh to give up his independence. The Company had no right to meddle with his internal affairs or foreign policy though he did not like to court unnecessary trouble by acting against the British. He trained his army in western methods and made it a powerful fighting force. Among his army officers were some competent foreigners like Allard and Ventura. He was signally successful in maintaining internal peace and controlling the turbulent mountain tribes of the north-western frontier region. Though his administrative system did not conform to modern concepts, it was conducted with due regard for justice and fair play as well as the well-being of the subjects. The combination of so many admirable features

Boundaries of
Sikh Kingdom

Achievements of
Ranjit Singh

in a single individual persuaded one French traveller to describe Ranjit Singh as 'a Bonaparte in miniature'.

Fall of the Sikh Kingdom : In 1838, the English were at war with Amir Dost Mohammad of Kabul (First Anglo-Afghan War, 1838-42). Ranjit Singh co-operated with them in this war. Soon after the war began, Ranjit Singh passed away (1839). Then, due to a variety of reasons, particularly because of lack of a competent ruler, the Sikh Kingdom became a prey to large-scale disorder. The weakness of the rulers placed the army in a dominant position. Between 1839 and 1843, two sons of Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh and Sher Singh, ascended the throne and died, and a grandson of Ranjit Singh, Nao Nihal Singh, met premature death.

Successors of
Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh's minor son, Dalip Singh, was then placed on the throne; his mother Jindan became his guardian. She and her advisers could not control the army, which began to dictate the appointment and dismissal of ministers. In this situation, the English were afraid of an impending collapse of the administrative structure in the Punjab. Lord Hardinge I was then the Governor-General. On the plea of safeguarding the frontiers, the border forts were strengthened and other military measures taken. These were construed by the Sikh army as English preparations for taking over the Punjab. This feeling in the army was utilised by the Sikh ministers for their own ends. They tried to manipulate matters in such a way that the Sikh army decided to

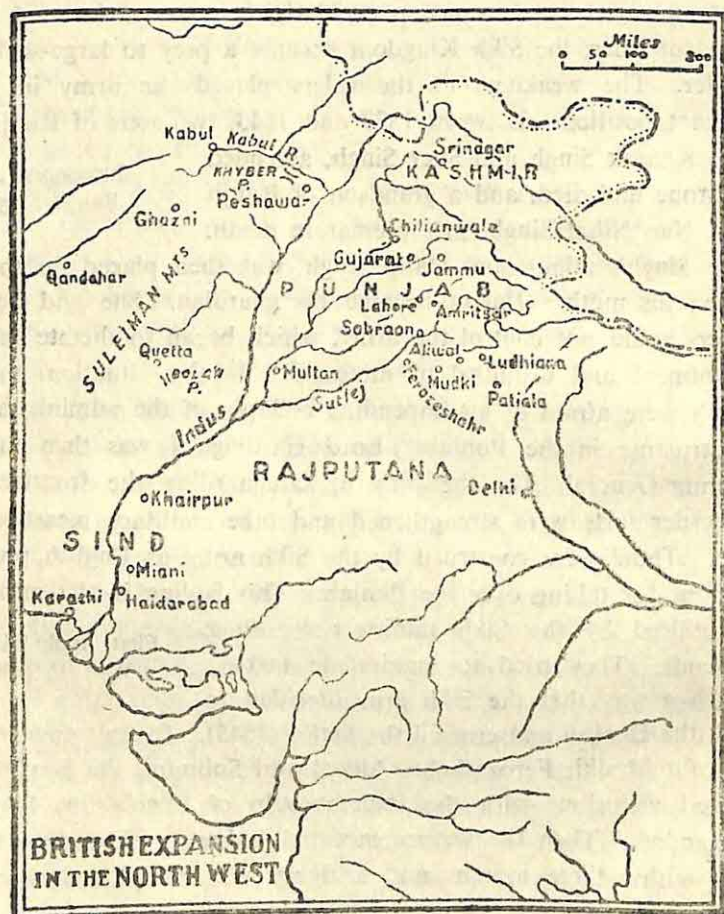
First Anglo-Sikh
War (1845-46)

attack the English and crossed the Sutlej (1845). In four engagements (at Mudki, Ferozeshahr, Aliwal and Sobraon) the English emerged victorious with the indirect help of treacherous Sikh commanders. Then the victors captured Lahore. The war was ended within three months and a treaty was made in Lahore (1846).

In terms of the treaty, the Jalandhar Doab lying between the Sutlej and the Beas, along with the Lahore Kingdom's territories to the left of the Sutlej, was ceded to the Company.

The Sikh Kingdom was reduced in strength through reduction of the army's size. The Sikhs had to agree to pay a huge war indemnity though they could not wholly abide by this term in view of the shortage of money in the royal coffers. As a result, Kashmir and Jammu were detached from the Sikh Kingdom and sold by

Treaty of
Lahore (1846)



the Company to Gulab Singh, a leading member of Ranjit Singh's court, who was now recognised by the Company as the ruler of both these territories. This reduced both the size and the reve-

nues of the Sikh Kingdom. In the north-western frontier, a new principality, amenable to the Company's influence, emerged.

A few months later, another treaty was made at Bhairawal (1846). The minor Maharaja Dalip Singh was brought under the Company's 'protection'. The British Resident virtually became the ruler of the Sikh State. A contingent of the Company's troops was stationed in the Punjab. The Sikh Kingdom lost its independence and was reduced to the status of a 'protected' State of the Company.

Treaty of
Bhairawal

To a freedom-loving and martial race like the Sikhs this was very naturally an unacceptable situation. Their resentment knew no bounds. The situation was further complicated by the English when they exiled Rani Jindan to the fort of Chunar (near Benares), far away from the Punjab, for her alleged anti-British sentiments. Sikh revolt occurred at Multan, in 1848. Dalhousie, the Governor-General, moved to crush the revolt militarily. Two battles were fought at Chilianwala and Gujrat (1849). At Chilianwala the English victory was far from decisive; but at Gujarat the Sikhs suffered total reverse. The Sikhs suffered defeat not because the soldiers were not courageous, but because their commanders were lacking in patriotism and tactical skill. Anyway, Multan fell to the English army. The two leaders of the revolt, Chhattar Singh and Sher Singh, surrendered (1849).

Second Anglo-
Sikh War

In terms of the treaty of Bhairawal, the administration of the Punjab rested with the Company. The King, Dalip Singh, who was a minor, had no power or responsibility. He was also not connected in any way with the revolt at Multan. In spite of this, Dalhousie annexed the Punjab by a proclamation (1849). The innocent Dalip Singh was sent away to England as a pensioner of the English. This was Dalhousie's imperialism with a vengeance, which simply brushed away all moral and legal considerations. The Company's Empire was thus extended up to the Khyber pass on the north-western frontier.

Annexation of
Sikh Kingdom

Conquest of Sind (1843): During the first half of the nineteenth century Sind was ruled by the Amirs of Hyderabad, Khairpur and Mirpur; they recognised the suzerainty of the rulers of Kabul only nominally. In 1809 and 1820, they had entered into treaties with the Company promising co-operation in certain matters. In 1831, Alexander Burnes journeyed up the river Indus towards Lahore. That was when the English were impressed with the political and commercial potentialities of the lower Indus valley. When Ranjit Singh prepared to extend his authority over this region, the Company made him put a stop to it. In 1832, the Company gained some commercial and political rights in Sind by virtue of a new treaty. In connection with the First Anglo-Aghan War, another treaty was made in 1839: this virtually placed the Amirs under the Company's 'protection'. The Company's army advanced through Sind in its march against Afghanistan.

After the First Anglo-Afghan War, the Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, adopted the policy of tightening the Company's control over the Amirs. General Sir Charles Napier was sent to Sind to put this policy into effect. Napier 'conducted his operations on the theory that the annexation of Sind would be a very beneficent piece of rascality for which it was his business to find an excuse'. He tried in many ways to dispossess the Amirs of their rights and destroyed one of their forts. An attack of the wild Baluchis was the signal for war. Napier won the battles of Miani and Dabo (1843). Sind became part of the Company's territory; the Amirs were exiled. There were no valid moral or political considerations which could provide even a semblance of justification for this sordid business. The Court of Directors of the Company also did not find this palatable, though it had no alternative but to accept the *fait accompli*.

Extension of territory under Dalhousie: Lord Dalhousie (1848-56), one of the most notable Governors-General of the British period, followed, like Wellesley before him, an expansionist policy. His rationale for this was that the Company's good government was better for the Indian people than the misrule

of the native potentates. He, therefore, did not hesitate to snatch up any opportunity that came his way to extend the Company's territories.

Dalhousie resorted to war to annex the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab (1849) and the Burmese province of Pegu (1852). He did not, however, depend on armed confrontation while swallowing some other States. In these cases, he either applied the *Doctrine of Lapse* or brought up charges of misrule.

The *Doctrine of Lapse* meant that in the absence of natural heirs, States dependent on the Company or created by it were to lapse to the Paramount Power (*i.e.*, the Company); they were not to pass, like private property, to the rulers' adopted sons, if any. However, there could be exceptions to this with the special permission of the Company, *i.e.*, the adopted sons could succeed as rulers provided the Company permitted this. It was the directive of the Court of Directors of the Company that such permission 'should be the exception, not the rule, and should never be granted but as a special mark of favour and approbation'. It was also laid down by the Court of Directors that no opportunity for 'just accession of territory' was to be given up. All these instructions had already been given before Lord Dalhousie's arrival in India. It was quite clear that the fundamental objective behind such policy decisions was to deprive the adopted sons of the rights, which they enjoyed both under Hindu and Islamic laws and traditions, to succeed as rulers. It cannot be stated that Dalhousie introduced the *Doctrine of Lapse*; this was in existence even at the time of his predecessors in terms of the instructions from the Court of Directors.

Circumstances offered Dalhousie certain opportunities to apply this *Doctrine* during his administration (1848-56), and the great expansionist that he was, he welcomed these opportunities with both hands. His predecessors as Governors-General had held that if annexation could be avoided, it was better not to resort to it. Dalhousie acted on the reverse principle: if annexation could be made under the *Doctrine of Lapse* it was better to

do so. This difference in outlook gave the Doctrine of Lapse during his period virtually a new dimension. He did not bother about the probable effects of the rigid application of a Doctrine which was totally opposed to Hindu religious sentiments and Indian tradition.

Dalhousie applied the *Doctrine of Lapse* in the case of four States—Satara in Maharashtra, Sambalpur in Orissa, and Jhansi and Nagpur in Central India. The principality of Satara had been created by the Company after the Third Anglo-Maratha War. The origins of the Bhonsle Kingdom of Nagpur went a long way back, but after the Third Anglo-Maratha War the throne had been given to a nominee of the Company. There were hardly sufficient reasons to regard the Kingdom of Nagpur as a creation of the Company. In the cases of Satara and Nagpur, Dalhousie was mainly motivated by the desire for consolidation of the Company's Empire. They were placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras and Bombay and Calcutta. With the two Kingdoms lapsing to the Company, both these lines of communications came fully under its control. Like Satara and Nagpur, Jhansi had also been a Maratha State. Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, whose adopted son was deprived of the succession, resented the annexation and became several years later a leader of the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

The confiscation of the titles and pensions of some childless Indian rulers followed logically from the Doctrine of Lapse. The adopted sons of the Nawab of Arcot and the Raja of Tanjore were deprived of the rights to titles and pensions. After the death (1853) of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II, his pension was not continued to his adopted son, Nana Saheb.

On charges of misgovernment, the Nawab of Oudh, Wazid Ali, was made a pensioner and his State annexed. The misrule in Oudh had been a regular feature for a pretty long time. In spite of their repeated warnings to the Nawabs, successive Governors-General could not bring about any improvement. Actually, the Nawabs, being absolutely dependent on the Company and

Annexation for
misgovernment

totally powerless, had neither the desire nor the capacity to attend to the well-being of their subjects. By the time of Dalhousie it was evident that nothing could be done to improve matters in Oudh so long as the Kingdom continued to be under the Nawabs, even nominally. The final decision for annexation was taken under instructions from the Court of Directors.

Dalhousie extended the Company's territories on other pretexts too. A portion of Sikkim was annexed (1850) because the ruler of the State had ill-treated the Company's subjects and seized an agent of the Company. The Nizam of Hyderabad was compelled to surrender the province of Berar to the Company because he had failed to meet financial obligations to the Company in respect of upkeep of subsidiary troops.

From Subsidiary Alliance to Paramountcy : Though some Indian rulers had lost their independence through being brought under Wellesley's system of Subsidiary Alliance, the time was still not ripe for introducing the system over the entire country. To cite an example, Ranjit Singh, though he entered into a treaty of friendship, did not submit to the system of Subsidiary Alliance; the treaty of Amritsar did not make his independence unreal. Among the Maratha rulers, Sindhia and Bhonsle, though defeated in war, did not accept all the terms of Subsidiary Alliance; no special terms were imposed on the worsted Holkar. Secondly, the rulers coming under the system of Subsidiary Alliance were given freedom as regards internal administration under certain conditions. A convention had more or less been established that both sides were to observe the conditions laid down in the treaties and not to claim any special rights not expressly stipulated. The concerned States, though not enjoying complete independence, were not definitely considered to be subordinate to the Company.

From the time of Lord Hastings onwards, a basic change began to transform the picture. In the first place, excepting the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh and Nepal, all other Indian States were gradually brought under the system of Subsidiary Alliance,

Everywhere outside the territories under the direct administration of the Company, its supremacy was firmly established through application of the system. Secondly, this supremacy went beyond the clauses of the respective treaties and acquired somewhat the character of an unwritten and undefined authority. The Company's authority over the States was not confined to the terms laid down in the treaties. Disregarding the treaty terms, the Company began to exercise control over the internal administration of the States. As a result, even in internal affairs, the rulers gradually began to lose their rights as embodied in the treaties. Succession issues, appointment of ministers and such other matters began to be governed by instructions from the Company's Government. This actually amounted to the

Paramountcy Company's 'Paramountcy', *i.e.*, its authority was not fettered by any treaty terms or laws and regulations. 'Paramountcy' was the Company's sovereign right to take any final decision in any matter relating to the Indian States in its own political interest. This right did not owe its origin to any new treaty or pact, but was the result of historical evolution. While the Company was growing from strength to strength, the States were gradually weakening. This stark reality was reflected in their mutual relations; the weak ally had no alternative but to submit to the dictates of the Paramount Power. The new system was in its full flowering by the time of Dalhousie. By then the so-called allies had actually been reduced to the status of subordinates.

The weakness of the Indian States was the inevitable result of the system of Subsidiary Alliance. One of the most notable of the British administrators under the Company, Sir Thomas Munro, observed: "Whenever the system is introduced, the country will soon bear the marks of it, in decaying villages and decreasing population" (*i.e.*, this system was making the administrative structure in the States fall to pieces, thereby increasing the misery of the subjects). The British Resident at Lahore, Sir Henry Lawrence, was of the opinion that administrative chaos in the States was due to the independence of the rulers on the

guidance of the superiorly-armed foreigners. The ruler was well aware that so long as he continued to obey the Resident in all administrative matters he was absolutely safe, for even if the subjects rebelled the Company's army was there to protect him. This naturally eroded his sense of responsibility as well as power; the subjects became prey to misgovernment. When the administrative system reached the breaking-point, the time became ripe for the Company's intervention. Governor-General Lord William Bentinck made the Raja of Mysore a pensioner and entrusted the Company's officers with the task of running the State's administration (1831). After half a century, Lord Ripon, the then Governor-General, restored the State to the Raja. In Hyderabad, people were subjected to misrule for years. The Nizam was then forced to part with the province of Berar. The heaviest blow fell on the Nawab of Oudh; the Company annexed his Kingdom. The Company had promised safety and security to the princes but had failed to redeem this pledge in certain cases because of its own policy. After the 'Sepoy Mutiny' the English became aware of the debit side of their high-handedness about the princely States and the Doctrine of Lapse was given up.

Effects of Company's authority over the States.



CHAPTER V

REACTION TO BRITISH POLICY

Discontent and Revolt : Even earlier than the 'Sepoy Mutiny' there was smouldering discontent against British rule ; regional uprisings were also not rare. Due to the Company's expansionist policy, people of different strata in Maharashtra, Burma, Assam, Oudh and other regions were harbouring discontent against the British. The Company's administrative system and laws, being opposed to local traditions in many cases, had roused suspicion in the minds of the people. Educated Indians resented being kept out of bounds for appointments to higher posts. The Company's economic policy greatly jeopardised the interests of Indian merchants and cultivators. Some English missionaries in their zeal for proselytisation heaped abuses on the Hindu religion and society and thus antagonised a large number of people.

After the fall of the Maratha Empire, there had been revolts among the *Bhils* in western India, the aboriginal *Mers* of Rajasthan and in Cutch. In northern India the *Gujars* and the *Jats* and the *Kohlis* in Gujarat had turned rebels. There had been several outbreaks in different parts of Burma. The *Khasi* and the *Santal* rebellions, respectively in Assam and Bengal, had assumed serious proportions. In the Mymensingh district, now in Bangladesh, the *Garo* and the *Hajang* tribes had resorted to arms. The simple peasants had also become prone to open defiance. The *Sannyasis* and the *Fakirs* had broken out in revolt in North Bengal. This has been mirrored in Bankim Chandra's novel, *Debi Chaudhurani*. At the time of Cornwallis, extreme penury in the districts of Bankura and Birbhum made peasants and common people resort to armed raids ; they brought the British administration in these areas, temporarily though, to a standstill. The *Chuars* in Manbhum and nearby areas rebelled time and again. Wellesley had to despatch troops to suppress them.

The Indian sepoy who shed blood to make the Company's Empire possible were far from happy with their British masters. They far outnumbered the Europeans in the Company's army. The well-trained and brave Indian sepoys had played a decisive role in the British conquest of India. But they had many grievances about their pay, food, outfit, etc. They also harboured the suspicion that they would be converted to Christianity by means fair or foul. In 1807, at Vellore in the Madras Presidency, and in 1824 at Barrackpore near Calcutta, the sepoys came out in open mutiny.

This simmering discontent all over the country had, however, not been able to shake the foundations of the Company's rule. The various rebellions, devoid of any cohesion and competent leadership, and dispersed both in time and space, were ineffectual challengers to a mighty ruler. The objectives and the methods of those raising the banner of revolt in different parts of the country differed in many respects. The rebellious mood had not yet fully crystalized, but the sporadic revolts had unconsciously paved the way for the great uprising of 1857.

Wahabi Movement: The establishment of the Company's empire had not only made the Muslims lose their political authority; their social status and influence had also waned and the privileges which they had so long enjoyed regarding service and commerce were no longer there. Many lost their landed properties. The gradual replacement of Persian by English as the official language restricted the scope of their employment under the Government. The propagation of Christianity and the spread of Western culture seemed to pose danger to Islam. The Muslims failed to adjust; they refused to take English education, remained aloof from Western ideas on society and politics, and became more dependent than before on traditional Islamic culture. They tried to project a new image of their society through the Wahabi and the Faraizi movements.

Discontent
among Muslims

The sphere of activity of Abdul Wahab (1703-87), the originator of the Wahabi movement, was Nejd in Arabia. In

India, this movement drew inspiration from the teachings of the famous Muslim saint of Delhi, Shah Wali-ul-lah (1702-67), though it was Syed Ahmad (1786-1831) of Rai Bareilly in Uttar

Objectives of
Wahabis

Pradesh who really introduced the movement in this country. The Wahabi movement aimed

mainly at reform or purification of Islam—to return to the pristine simplicity of religion and society of Muhammad's time by discarding the later accretions. But the Indian Wahabis did not confine their objectives to religious reforms only ; their programme also envisaged replacement of infidel rule by the rule of the true believers. The territory of an infidel ruler was regarded as *Dar-ul-harb* (land of the enemy) and the faithful were supposed to be under a prescription not to reside inside such a territory. As a result, the Wahabi movement was transformed into a political revolt. For nearly half a century, ranging from 1820 to 1870, the Wahabis were influential in different areas of India.

Syed Ahmad called upon the Wahabis to take to the path of struggle to free India from the clutches of the infidel British. His aim was to convert India to a *Dar-ul-Islam* (land of Islam) and restore Muslim rule. To maintain organisational discipline,

Syed Ahmad

he appointed four 'Caliphs' or representatives.

Their propaganda activities awakened a new religious feeling among the Muslims. Syed Ahmad himself donned army uniform, imparted military training to his followers, and conducted parades. Against the infidel rulers, he sought the help of certain Indian princes.

Syed Ahmad also considered the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab as a State of the infidels. In 1826, he went to the north-western frontier region and, with the help of the mountain tribes, waged war against Ranjit Singh. Peshawar fell into his hands temporarily (1830). Soon afterwards, he died (1831) fighting against the Sikhs who recaptured Peshawar.

After the death of Syed Ahmad, the leadership of the deputies known as 'Caliphs' kept the Wahabi movement alive. In different areas of Bengal and Bihar and in Hyderabad in the Deccan, the

Wahabis established strong centres of activity. The main military base was set up at Sittana in the north-western region. For several decades the Wahabis clashed repeatedly with the British who became their sole target after the annexation of the Sikh Kingdom by the Company. At last, in 1863, the Wahabi military power was totally smashed. Thereafter, their leaders in different areas were arrested and given punishments with a view to breaking up the organisation. They were tried at Ambala and Patna (1864-65). Later, several more were put in the dock at Malda and Rajmahal.

Suppression of
Wahabis

In 1871, Justice Norman of the Calcutta High Court, who had heard the appeal in the Patna case against the Wahabis, was murdered by a Muslim. Next year Lord Mayo, the Governor-General, was killed in the Andamans by a Muslim. Both the killers were suspected to have had connections with the Wahabi movement. Be that as it may, the alertness and the policy of suppression of the British made the Wahabi movement gradually die down. But among the mountain tribes of the north-west, its influence lingered for long. Sir Syed Ahmad, the most prominent leader of the Muslims in the last quarter of the 19th century, opposed the political objectives of the Wahabis.

After the death of Syed Ahmad, the religious aspect of the Wahabi movement was gradually pushed to the background while the political and economic motivations gained prominence. The movement had the massive backing of the Muslim community. Not only the upper classes, but also the commoners were attracted by it. In certain areas, the Wahabis moved against the affluent Hindus. As a result, the movement assumed a communal form. But its political objectives were more or less supported by many Hindus as well. The Wahabi leaders did not oppose the Hindus and run the political side of the movement in isolation from Hindu society. It must, however, be admitted that the Hindus did not participate actively in the movement; there was little possibility that Hindu society would

Nature of
Wahabi Move-
ment

forge close links with a movement which aimed primarily at purification of Islam. Again, a programme which aimed at putting an end to British rule and restoring Muslim rule had hardly the potential to invite any great response from the Hindus. For all these reasons, the Wahabi movement cannot be considered to be a full-fledged national movement, though in view of the movement's political objectives it has to be regarded as a move for independence. Geographically the influence of the Wahabis had spread all over North India (from Bengal to the Punjab and the north-west frontier region) and Madras; they were also active in the territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

Faraizi Movement: In the nineteenth century another movement running parallel with the Wahabi movement and having similar characteristics influenced Muslim society in Bengal. This was the Faraizi movement. It was on the whole a powerful movement in the period between 1818 and 1906; after 1906 its lingering influence was confined only to the district of Faridpur in the present Bangladesh. Its sponsor, Haji Shariyatulla (1781-1840), was a resident of this district. During his long sojourns at Mecca and Cairo he had, through study and discussion, acquired profound knowledge regarding Islam. After returning home, he assumed the role of a religious reformer in his native district. The word 'Faraizi' means the 'due obligations' as laid down by Islam. The Faraizis aimed primarily at placing monotheism on a firm footing while keeping the purity of Islam in view. With this Shariyatulla combined what was virtually an economic programme. In certain cases, he called upon poor Muslim commoners to cease paying taxes to Hindu zamindars. In the matter of observing religious functions also, the Faraizis came to disputes with the Hindus. The Faraizis did not, as the Wahabis did, adopted a co-operative attitude with the Hindus.

After the death of Shariyatulla his son, Mohsin or Dadu Mian (1819-62), assumed the leadership of the Faraizi movement. He organised the Muslim peasants into a cohesive

body to protect them from the oppression of the Hindu zamindars and European indigo-planters. He had his main centre of activity in the village of Bahadurpur in Faridpur district. The British regarded his followers as law-breakers and looters. Certain factors lent some justification to the view that the Faraizis also, like the Wahabis, aimed at putting an end to English rule and restoring that of the Muslims. Dudu Mian was in prison for some time.

The Faraizi movement suffered a decline after the death of Dudu Mian for want of able leadership. A picture of the Faraizii movement under his son, Abdul Gafur or Noa Mian (1852-83), is to be found in the autobiography of the poet Nabinchandra Sen. Noa Mian did not attach any great importance to economic and political programmes and steered the movement towards religious reforms. After this, the movement began to wane. The alertness of the Government and their measures of suppression led to a further decline of the movement. Later on, the Faraizis survived only as a narrow religious group.

Titu Mir: Mir Nishar Ali or Titu Mir (1782-1831), associated with the Wahabi movement, openly took the field against the English in the district of 24-Parganas in Bengal. He became acquainted with Syed Ahmad, who founded the Wahabi movement in India, at Mecca and turned into his disciple. Titu laid particular emphasis on the purity of Islam, but did not oppose Hinduism. His methods had similarities with those of the Wahabis. On the other hand, against the Hindu zamindars and European indigo-planters he moved like the Faraizis. He had considerable influence over the Muslim peasants in the districts of 24-Parganas, Nadia and Jessore. At first, he was not prepared to take up arms, as the Wahabis did, against the Company's Government. But the clashes of his followers with the zamindars and indigo-planters disturbed rural peace and made him incur the displeasure of the Government. Troops were sent against him. Then his followers began a policy of non-co-operation against the Government. Gradually, they grew in courage; there was a call for struggle for re-establishment of the political rights

of the Muslims. In 1831, at a place called Narikelbaria in 24-Parganas, Titu was killed in a clash with the Company's troops. His movement died with him; it did not produce any permanent effects.

'Sepoy Mutiny': Causes: The resentment against English rule which had accumulated in different parts of the country due to a variety of reasons in the middle of the nineteenth century found a concrete expression in the great revolt of 1857. The Indian sepoys spearheaded the revolt and their bravery shook the very foundations of the Company's Empire; but it would not have been such a momentous event had it been entirely deprived of the sympathy and co-operation of the other sectors of the nation. Mutiny among soldiers was no rare event in British India. The sepoys had mutinied at Vellore in Madras in 1806 and at Barrackpore in 1827. Four such mutinies (1844, 1849, 1850, 1852) had taken place among the sepoys in the thirteen years immediately preceding 1857. But the revolt of 1857 was not a mere local affair; there were indications of a national resistance centring round the uprising of the sepoys. Thus, the narrow meaning of the expression 'Sepoy Mutiny', used by the English to designate the great revolt, actually obscures its historic significance.

The great revolt of 1857 did not occur merely to register the discontent of the sepoys against the use of cartridges supposedly greased with cow and pork fat. Various military, political, religious and social as also economic factors combined to make this great uprising against British rule possible.

The sepoys did not at all like to go outside the borders of India—to countries such as Burma, Afghanistan and China. In environments unfamiliar to them, they met with various inconveniences and found the atmosphere uncongenial for due observance of their own social customs and manners and religion. Almost immediately after assuming charge as Governor-General (1856), Lord Canning issued instructions to the effect that all sepoys newly recruited in the Bengal Army could, according as necessity arose,

Military
factors

be sent anywhere on duty like the sepoys of the Madras Army.* This order was not applicable to the sepoys recruited prior to its issue, though it created suspicions in every mind.

An experienced British officer wrote in the very year of the revolt (1857): "Almost all the mutinies of India...have been more or less produced, or at least have had in some sort the initiative, from ourselves". He supported this conclusion with the following remark: "There has usually been some departure from contract; some disregard of the feelings, health or convenience of the native soldiers, when at the same moment the utmost care was lavished on a European regiment; some unwise tampering with their religious views or prejudices; some interference with their pay or rights, or what they supposed to be their rights." That the sepoys had many reasons to be resentful is evidenced by this admission.

There were defects in the leadership of the Bengal Army. Lord William Bentinck had pointed out that it was expensive but inefficient. On the whole, three factors had produced such a situation. In the first place, many competent Army officers had been transferred to duties in the administrative and political spheres; as a result, there was a dearth of efficient officers in the Army. Secondly, promotion in the Army depended on seniority and not merit. This system put inefficiency at a premium and made it possible for many superior posts in the Army to be occupied by mediocre British officers. Thirdly, as there was no fixed age-limit for retirement, there were many British officers in the Army who were simply dead wood and should have retired long ago. As the British officers were in command, their inefficiency led to erosion of discipline among the sepoys. Once laxity has got the upper hand, it is no easy task to restore discipline.

*The Company's forces were divided into three separate units—Bengal Army, Madras Army and Bombay Army. The first was directly under the authority of the Governor-General and the latter two under the authority of the Governor of the Presidency concerned. Each Army had its own Commander-in-Chief.

The sepoys of the Bengal Army had become enmeshed in regional and family ties. Most sepoys hailed from a particular region (present Uttar Pradesh) and belonged to a single social class of high-caste Brahmins and Rajputs. Class and caste prejudices were so deeply rooted among them that the Western ideals of discipline could hardly make these vanish. As a result, it was beyond the capacity of the British officers to induce the sepoys to embrace the ideal of comradeship, which was a 'must' for military discipline. Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sind, had observed: "High caste, that is to say, Mutiny, is encouraged". But 'Mutiny', *i.e.*, lack of discipline, was not confined to the Brahmin and Rajput sepoys alone. In 1857, the low-caste sappers had also risen in revolt at Meerut.

Had the proportion of the Europeans been greater in the Army the discontent and indiscipline of the sepoys would not perhaps have gone to such terrible extremes. But in the India of 1857, the ratio of European officers and ranks in the Company's Army was only 19 per cent. The majority of the Europeans had been based in the newly-conquered Punjab. Proportionately, they were in a hopeless minority in present Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, many important Army bases as also the greater portion of the artillery were firmly in the grip of the sepoys. Dalhousie was well aware of the need for a sufficient number of Europeans in the Army, but the authorities of the Company did not pay any heed to his warnings in this regard.

Thus, while the discontent, indiscipline and numerical superiority of the sepoys were increasing, Dalhousie's policy of annexation just at this juncture made the political situation restive and ominous. The annexation of Oudh, and the move to oust the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, from the palace of his illustrious predecessors in Delhi, hurt Muslim sentiments to their very depths. The swallowing up of different Hindu principalities under the *Doctrine of Lapse* and the refusal of pension to the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II's adopted son, Nana Saheb, made the Hindus fear the worst. Those Hindu and Muslim rulers who had not yet

been deprived of their territories could not but look to the future with apprehension.

Dalhousie's policy had not only played havoc with the rulers. Those families which thrived under the rulers' favours, those who earned their living through some sort of service in these States, and those who were attached as officers and ranks to the worthless armies of these States—all of them felt their interests insecure and hence were resentful towards the British. After the annexation of Oudh, the ex-Nawab's favourites faced an intolerable situation. Canning then removed the newly-appointed Chief Commissioner of Oudh, Jackson, and replaced him with Sir Henry Lawrence, who was sympathetic to the Indians. But the change of individuals made no basic change in the system; the introduction of British rule cost many people their landed properties, service and other facilities. An English historian has observed: "The minds of the civil population of all classes and ranks, Hindus and Muhammadans, princes and people, were agitated and disturbed by feelings of uneasiness and vague apprehension". These were the reasons why the 'Sepoy Mutiny' assumed so intense a form in Oudh.

To the fears about loss of material interests were added apprehensions regarding loss of caste and religion. The sepoys sent to foreign countries had to cross the 'black waters' of the seas; conservative Hindu opinion considered this as loss of caste and religion. The over-zealous missionaries had created fear of mass conversion to Christianity. The abolition of religious practices like Sati and infanticide, the legal recognition of the right of inheritance of persons forsaking their ancestral religion, the recognition of widow remarriage in law and such other governmental measures had made the vast Hindu society restless. The spread of Western education, the introduction of female education, the construction of the Railways and the electric telegraph, though in consonance with the modern spirit, were widely regarded as activities aimed at tampering with religion, both of the Hindu and the Muslim. Though a microscopic minority be-

Religious and
social factors

longing to the upper classes was in favour of Western education, many of them did not like that the laws should be invoked to usher in social reforms.

The educated community was gradually moving towards political awareness. There was resentment among them against the bar to appointment of Indians to top posts under the Government. The demands for share in administrative and legislative functions were being raised by different political bodies and voiced through newspapers. The system of separate trial for white men in criminal cases was being opposed. The educated class, though no supporter of the 'Sepoy Mutiny', was instrumental in bringing about a new political consciousness through propagation of anti-British sentiments.

In the economic sphere grievances against the Company's administration were widespread among several sections of the people. The Indian mercantile class suffered as a result of British competition. The ruin of cottage industries, brought about by the Company's policy of promoting the sale of British manufactures, impoverished the lower classes of the people in the villages.

The peasants were hard hit by the increase of rent and other forms of petty tyranny practised by zamindars and indigo-planters. The Santal rebellion and the indigo agitation in Bengal revealed the maladies of the agrarian system. The complicated machinery of law and justice was skilfully exploited by the propertied classes for exploitation of the illiterate masses.

'Sepoy Mutiny': Events : The whole thing was triggered by a seemingly trivial event. In 1856, the Enfield rifle with greased cartridges was introduced for use in the Army. The sepoys suspected that the grease was made of cow and pork fat, and as it was the practice to bite cartridges before these could be used, the new measure seemed to them to have been introduced solely with a view to making them lose their caste and religion. The news of the sad plight of the English in their war with Russia in Europe (the Crimean War) had lessened the respect of the sepoys

about their courage and martial skill. As the number of British soldiers in India was quite small, the sepoys were elated with prospects of an easy victory. Early in 1857, mutiny first broke out at Berhampore and Barrackpore in Bengal. Soon afterwards, Meerut in Uttar Pradesh became the scene of a major uprising (May 1857).

The engagements which were fought in connection with the Mutiny took place mainly in five regions: (1) Delhi; (2) Lucknow; (3) Kanpur; (4) Rohilkhand; (5) Central India and Bundelkhand.

The rebellious sepoys from Meerut marched towards Delhi and captured the city very next day (May 1857). The Mughal Empire was resurrected by a declaration and Bahadur Shah II placed on the throne as the Emperor. The revolt spread to the Agra district, though the sepoys failed to capture the city of Agra. In September 1857, the British recap-

Delhi
tured Delhi. Bahadur Shah was made a prisoner and exiled to Rangoon where he died a few years later. He had no responsibility for the revolt in Delhi and had no power to control the rebellious sepoys; still, through an irony of fate, he had to pay a very heavy penalty. He was the last Emperor of the Mughal dynasty.

At Lucknow, the sepoys besieged the Residency; Sir Henry Lawrence, the British Resident, died in the fighting (July 1857). In March 1858, British forces under Generals Colin Campbell and Outram captured Lucknow. After this, the
Lucknow
revolt in the Oudh area came under the control of the British. Towards the end of 1858, most of the sepoys were driven away: many had to cross over the borders of Nepal in the north.

At Kanpur, the sepoys were led by Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II. He declared himself as the Peshwa. A large number of Britishers, both Army personnel and civilians, including even women and
Kanpur
children, were slaughtered mercilessly. The folly and weakness of the British General, Sir Hugh Wheeler,

were mainly responsible for this ghastly incident. Late in December 1857, General Sir Colin Campbell recaptured Kanpur.

In Rohilkhand, the revolt began at Bareilly in May 1857. A grandson of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, the famous Rohilla Chief of the time of Warren Hastings, was proclaimed as the Nawab. However, the Rohilla Nawab of Rampur remained loyal to the British. General Campbell recaptured Bareilly in May 1858.

In Central India, the mantle of the rebels' leadership fell on Lakshmi Bai and Tantia Topi. Lakshmi Bai was previously the Rani of Jhansi. When her husband died childless, Lord Dalhousie denied her adopted son succession to the throne under the *Doctrine of Lapse*; Jhansi was made part of the Company's Empire. General Sir Hugh Rose described her as the 'best and bravest' of the rebels. She had as her chief assistant Tantia Topi, a general of Nana Saheb. When Sir Hugh Rose occupied Jhansi and Kalpi, Lakshmi Bai and Tantia Topi took over Gwalior. Then Sindhia, who was loyal to the British, left Gwalior to become a refugee at Agra. In June 1858, British forces relieved Gwalior. Lakshmi Bai, in male attire, fell fighting heroically. Tantia Topi was caught and put to death a year later, Nana Saheb fled to Nepal where he died in oblivion.

In Bihar, there was a revolt at Arrah, led by Kunwar Singh, a Rajput zamindar. He tried to organise rebel groups in various parts of Central India and Uttar Pradesh. He died of a wound suffered in an engagement. There were some incidents in Rajputana and Maharashtra. Madras was relatively quiet. Everything was normal in the newly-annexed Punjab. Not to speak of rebelling, the Sikhs rather helped the British re-occupy Delhi. Many among the Indian rulers had actively co-operated with the British. The support offered by the ministers of Gwalior, Hyderabad and Nepal was particularly effective. After a year of fighting, peace was declared all over India in July 1858.

'Sepoy Mutiny': Causes of Failure: The 'Sepoy Mutiny'

was doomed to failure from the very beginning. There is no reason to think that the revolt was a pre-conceived, pre-planned and methodical affair. It was in reality a spontaneous outburst of years of accumulated discontent among the sepoys. It was not the result of incitement of patronage from any foreign power like Russia or Persia.

Because there was no unified planning and no central leadership, only sporadic revolts occurred here and there with little or almost no inter-connection between them. Each centre of revolt had its own local leadership, its own local problems and its own separate aims. On the other hand, British policy and operations had the crucial advantage of centralised direction and planning under the Government of India. Lord Canning, the Governor-General, was the supreme co-ordinating authority in respect of all British moves. The rebels could never muster their total strength for any combined operation against the British. The absence of any unified approach was one of the main causes of rebel weakness.

The sepoys could not bank upon the full support of the civil population. In some places some sections of the people had, of course, actively helped the sepoys; but except in Oudh, Rohilkhand and parts of Bihar, the revolt did not actually culminate in a national uprising. In other places the revolt was confined only to the sepoys; there were no intimate links between the population at large and the rebels. Even the sepoy regiments themselves did not as a whole take up arms against the British; rather a large section of them openly fought on the side of the British. The brave Sikhs of the Punjab, instead of making common cause with the rebels, were instrumental in suppressing them.

The Indian ruling princes also did not rally round the rebel sepoys. Sir Dinkar Rao and Sir Salar Jang, ministers respectively of Gwalior and the Nizam, helped the British considerably. Sir Jang Bahadur, the Gurkha chief of Nepal, sent Gurkha soldiers to take part in suppressing the revolt. On the north-western frontier, Dost Muhammad, the Amir of Afghanistan, was friendly

to the British. Operating without the active help of the people in most parts of the country, the rebels could never hope to turn the tables against the combined forces of the Company and the Indian princes.

Militarily, the sepoys suffered from many weaknesses. They were distinctly inferior to the British in arms and discipline. With the telegraph and other means of communication totally under British control, the sepoys were at a great disadvantage in this sphere. While the English could easily maintain links with different parts of the country, the sepoys could not do so. From the point of view of tactical skill also, the sepoys had no very competent leaders in command. Lakshmi Bai and Tantia Topi did not lack in courage; but they could hardly match British Generals like Campbell and Havelock in experience and tactical skill.

Revolt, National Movement, War of Independence? Was the 'Sepoy Mutiny' actually a 'mutiny' limited only to the sepoys, who formed a tiny fraction of the massive Indian population, or was it a widespread national movement or war of independence for throwing off the shackles of foreign rule? Opinions sharply differ as to the true character of this historic event.

In the early stages, the revolt was strictly limited to the sepoys only. No only that; not even the sepoy regiments themselves took part in the uprising in their entirety. In fact, a large section of them sided with the British. Later, however, the revolt spread far and wide and more sepoys, both Hindu and Muslim, came over to the rebel side.

From the point of view of the people in general, it would seem that only in Oudh and Rohilkhand and in some parts of Bihar did the revolt of the sepoys assume the form of a national movement. The Talukdars as well as the ryots in Oudh were locked in a grim struggle with the English. But the Sikhs fought against the rebels; the educated community in Bengal did not co-operate with the sepoys; and the Indian princes were opposed to them. In the closing stages of the revolt, the unruly conduct of the sepoys in different places cost them the sympathy of the civil population. Thus they lost subsequently whatever sym-

pathy they had been able to attract from the people in the early phases.

No movement can qualify as a genuine national movement unless it is actively backed by the people. In the India of that time, political consciousness was still limited to the microscopic minority which constituted the educated community ; nationalism in the real sense had not yet evolved. So, no genuine national movement was possible then.

Looked at from the geographical aspect, it has to be admitted that a large part of the country was virtually untouched by the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. The Madras Presidency was totally free from its influence. In the Bombay Presidency, it was only in Maharashtra that faint echoes of the revolt could be heard. The Punjab was faithful to the British. In Bengal, the sepoys had been unable to enlist the active sympathy of either the educated or the commoner. Only in Uttar Pradesh and some areas of Bihar and Central India could the revolt score a little success, and that too only temporarily. As such, the Sepoy Mutiny cannot be regarded as India's war of independence against the British.

The sepoys aimed at restoring the Mughal dynasty after foreign rule had been got rid of. Had the revolt succeeded, the Peshwa's Kingdom would also have been resurrected. Judging from this aspect, the Sepoy Mutiny can be considered, though in a strictly limited sense, as a war of independence. Were it successful, British colonial rule and economic exploitation would have vanished from India. But the 'Mutiny' had its origin in the concern for preservation of religion and age-old social customs : it was not rooted in any clear antifeudal outlook. Indeed, narrow personal considerations dominated the entire course of the great event. India's newly-evolving culture and the changing economic scene were basically in contradiction with the faded Mughal past and the equally obsolete feudalism of by-gone days. Any restoration of the Mughal Empire and the Peshwa's Kingdom would have resurrected the past which was best gone for

ever. In such an eventuality India would have lost her newly-acquired Western culture and progressive outlook.

The failure of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' placed the responsibility for conducting the freedom struggle against the British on the shoulders of the educated gentry. This section of the community had no faith in armed struggle. The events of 1857-58 made this attitude stronger than ever. Assuming that constitutional methods would ultimately lead to India's political resurrection, the educated community now came forward to initiate political movements. The birth of the Congress in 1885 lent new force to this point of view. The British came gradually to appreciate the significance of such movements. Long afterwards, India achieved freedom through non-violence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

'Sepoy Mutiny': Direct Effects: The most significant direct effect of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' was the end of the Company's rule in India. The influential leaders in England came round to the view that after such a catastrophic event, it was no longer desirable to keep the administration of such a vast country in the hands of the Company. As such, Queen Victoria of England herself took over the administration of India. The Government of India Act, 1858, introduced this new system.

The impact of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' persuaded the Government of India to modify its policy towards the Indian States. The *Doctrine of Lapse* was abandoned.

One remarkable result of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' was the re-organisation of the Army. The number of European soldiers was increased. In the formation of the Indian regiments care was taken to ensure—through a mix-up of recruits from different classes and regions—that the sepoys could no longer come together in a common front against the British. The artillery was placed exclusively in the charge of Europeans so that in the event of any other revolt in future the strength of the sepoys would remain strictly limited.

During the 'Mutiny' and after its suppression, the British

authorities both in the Army and in the civil administration often displayed a spirit of revenge towards the Indians. Many were subjected to severe punishments on charges of involvement in the 'Mutiny'. Canning opposed such excesses and adopted a liberal policy. For this, the European community gave him the derisive title of 'Clemency Canning'. For long afterwards, the Europeans regarded the Indians with suspicion and disdain, for they had not been able to forget the excesses of some of the rebels. The Indian community, on its part, could neither forgive nor forget the memory of the Europeans' ugly acts of vengeance. The racial animosity which such attitudes generated became a political problem in the period following the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

CHAPTER VI

CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION

Government of India Act, 1858: The Government of India Act, 1858, passed by the British Parliament, put an end to the Company's rule and placed the Indian administration directly under Queen Victoria of England. The powers of the Court of Directors of the Company and the Board of Control were now vested in a Minister of the British Cabinet. He became known as the 'Secretary of State for India'. The dual administration introduced in India by Pitt's India Act of 1784 now came to an end; all powers were centralised in the hands of a Minister. Like the President of the Board of Control, he also became a member of the Cabinet in England. A 'Council of India' comprising 15 members was set up to advise him. It was arranged to appoint members of the Council from persons experienced in Indian affairs. The Council could only act in an advisory capacity; excepting financial matters, in most other spheres, formulation of procedure and final decision rested with

the Secretary of State for India, who remained accountable to Parliament in all matters relating to India. The Government of India was bound to act under instructions from the Secretary of State.

Queen's Proclamation (1858): To reassure her Indian subjects, Queen Victoria issued a Proclamation in 1858 in connection with her assumption of the administration of India. The Proclamation assured that the Government of India would maintain a strictly impartial attitude in matters religious and social, that the higher posts in the public service would be open for all subjects of the Crown irrespective of birth, colour and creed, that all treaty obligations entered into with the Indian Princes under the Company's regime would be scrupulously discharged, and that the policy of annexation of Indian States actively pursued by Dalhousie would be given up. The apprehensions in the Indian mind which had paved the way for explosive 'Sepoy Mutiny' were removed by this Proclamation. Canning gave up the *Doctrine of Lapse* in terms of the Proclamation; the system of permitting adoption of sons by childless Indian Princes was introduced.

The Government of India Act, 1858, did not introduce any changes in the internal administration of India. The Queen's Proclamation, however, elevated the Governor-General to the position of 'Viceroy' or Royal representative. Though this raised his status, there were no changes in the powers enjoyed by him (*i.e.*, he did not get any new powers).

Judicial reforms: Under the Company, there were three principal courts in each of the three Presidency cities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay: one Supreme Court, and two *Sadar Adalats* for trial respectively of civil and criminal cases. The Supreme Court was the English King's Court, while the two *Sadar Adalats* were the Company's Courts. The existence of three courts had given rise to various complexities in the judicial system. After the abolition of the Company's rule, there was no longer any justification for the separate existence of the King's Court and the Company's Courts. In 1861, Parliament,

through the *Indian High Courts Act*, introduced a new system.

The Supreme Court and the *Sadar Adalats* were merged together and reorganised into one High Court in each Presidency city (Calcutta, Madras and Bombay). All the powers of the Supreme Court and the two *Sadar Adalats* were vested in the High Courts. Each High Court was to consist of an Original Side and an Appellate Side. The functions of the Supreme Court now devolved on the Original Side, while the Appellate Side dealt with the functions which previously rested with the two *Sadar Adalats*. The High Courts were to try both civil and criminal cases. Each High Court was to have one Chief Justice and not more than 15 Puisne Judges. The Judges were to be appointed by the Queen; in actual fact, it was the Secretary of State for India who discharged this function. Besides the judicial functions, the High Courts were also entrusted with another duty. Each High Court was to exercise 'superintendence' over all the courts in its jurisdiction.

Appeals could be preferred against the judgements of the High Courts in the Queen's Privy Council in London. A Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which was the highest court of appeal for the whole of the British Empire (excluding Great Britain and Ireland), heard these appeals.

During the Company's regime, only the Supreme Court could try Europeans in criminal cases. After the setting up of the High Courts, this privilege vested in them. In 1882, changes were made providing for trial in the mofussil courts also, of criminal cases involving Europeans; the Magistrate himself was to be a European with powers to impose only a limited penalty. This system had two drawbacks. In the first place, no Indian Magistrate could try a European accused. Secondly, the penalty which the European Magistrate could impose on a European accused was necessarily to be less than the penalty that could be imposed on an Indian accused for the same offence.

Discrimination
in judicial
system

To do away with this discriminatory system, Ilbert, the Law Member of the Executive Council of the then Governor-General,

Lord Ripon, prepared a Bill. During discussions on the Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council, the entire European community made a tremendous hullabaloo about it, for they were absolutely opposed to the trial of whites by Indian Magistrates. This event nakedly exposed the racial prejudices of the whites. Indian nationalism was then gradually coming into its own. The nationalist leaders started a movement in favour of the Bill. It was finally provided that Indian Magistrates could try Europeans, but the accused could call for trial by a jury comprising Europeans only. Naturally, this did not put a stop to discrimination, as the Indian accused had no blanket right to insist on trial by jury in every case. The Ilbert Bill was Ilbert Bill (1883) not concerned with any major judicial issue, but the refusal of the Europeans to countenance even its modest objectives gave it a political importance which was not intrinsic to it.

Codification of law : The Charter Act of 1833 had provided for the setting up of a Law Commission to assist the Government of India in reforming existing laws and framing new ones. Macaulay was the President of the first Law Commission. He drafted the Indian Penal Code which came into force long afterwards in a changed form (1860).

The first Law Commission worked in Calcutta. Later, three such Law Commissions were set up, one after another: all of these were based in London. These Commissions used to send to India draft-laws on a host of matters, to be adopted here as Acts after discussions in the Imperial Legislative Council. Within two decades of the end of the Company's rule, several law-codes on various subjects were compiled. The Civil Procedure Code and the Criminal Procedure Code were extensively revised. New laws were made on marriage, contract, company affairs, etc. As a result, legal intricacies and inconsistencies were to a great extent removed and the judicial system improved.

Indian Councils Act, 1861 : The Legislative Council, which had been formed under the Charter Act of 1853, did not include any Indian member. After the 'Sepoy Mutiny' the

authorities in England came to realise that without a first-hand acquaintance with the hopes and desires of the Indian people it was next to impossible for a handful of British civilians to successfully administer and make laws for such a vast country. The Secretary of State for India, Sir Charles Wood, observed that the inclusion of Indian members in the Legislative Council would be helpful in attracting Indian support to British rule. After the bitter experience of 1857-58, it had been found politically desirable to placate highly placed Indians.

Two other causes also had made it imperative to change the composition of the Legislative Council. In the first place, under the Charter Act of 1853 the rights of the Legislative Council had been restricted to the sphere of legislation only ; it had no right to discuss administrative matters or criticise governmental measures. But under Dalhousie the Legislative Council used to ignore these limitations and discuss various matters. Its procedure was such that it had almost become an 'Anglo-Indian House of Commons'. Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control and later Secretary of State, did not like this ; it was his policy that the Legislative Council would confine itself to legislation only. Secondly, the Legislative Council used to frame laws for the whole of British India. Previously, the Governor and the Council in Madras and in Bombay used to make laws for their respective Presidency ; but the Charter Act of 1833 had taken away these rights from them and introduced centralised legislation. The Legislative Council at the Centre included only two official members nominated by the Madras and Bombay Governments ; other members were not sufficiently conversant with the local conditions in these two Presidencies. As a result, the requirements of Madras and Bombay were not sufficiently taken into account while legislating. Decentralisation of the system of legislation (*i.e.*, restoration of the rights of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies to legislate for themselves) had, therefore, become imperative.

In 1861, Parliament passed the *Indian Councils Act* moved by Wood. This changed the composition of the Imperial Legislative

Council. The Governor-General and the members of his Council became its *ex-officio* members; there were additional members numbered between 6 to 12, of whom at least half were non-officials (*i.e.*, not belonging to Government service). How many additional members were to be taken was to be decided by the Governor-General, who nominated them himself. The Act did not make it binding to include Indian members; but it became the practice to include some Indians among the additional members.

Composition
of new Legisla-
tive Councils

Provincial Legislative Councils were separately set up in Madras and Bombay. The Governor, the members of his Council and the provincial Advocate General became *ex-officio* members of the Provincial Legislative Council; the number of additional members would be between 4 and 8, and at least half of them would be non-officials. How many additional members were to be appointed was to be decided by the Governor, who nominated them himself. The Act did not make it obligatory to include Indian members, though in practice some Indians began to find place among the additional members.

In the three provinces (Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab) under Lieutenant-Governors, the power to set up Legislative Councils was vested in the Government of India under the Act, which also included detailed provisions relating to their composition. In each province, the Legislative Council was to comprise the Lieutenant-Governor and some Councillors. The number of such Councillors, of whom at least one-third should be non-officials, was to be fixed by the Government of India, and the Lieutenant-Governor was to nominate them subject to confirmation by the Governor-General. Legislative Councils were set up in Bengal in 1862, in the North-Western Provinces in 1886 and in the Punjab in 1897. Though there was no obligatory provision for inclusion of Indians, in actual practice each Legislative Council had some Indians among the nominated Councillors.

The Act of 1861 laid down a policy of decentralisation; Legislative Councils were provided not only for Madras and

Bombay, but for other provinces also. However, the jurisdiction of the Legislative Council of the Centre and that of the Provincial Councils were not defined. The Governor-General's Legislative Council was given the power to legislate for the whole of British India and for all classes of people. Thus in respect of those matters also in which the interests of only one province were involved, *i.e.*, in respect of matters in which the interests of British India as a whole or more than one province were not involved, the Governor-General's Legislative Council was empowered to legislate, even though normally such legislation was the business of the Provincial Legislative Councils. The Provincial Legislative Councils were not given power to legislate, without the previous sanction of the Governor-General, on certain important matters (*e.g.*, Government loans, fiscal policy, Posts and Telegraphs, Penal Code, external affairs). This severely limited the jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislative Councils. Moreover, any Act passed by any of the Provincial Legislative Councils could be set aside by the Governor-General and the Queen (*i.e.*, the Secretary of State for India acting in the name of the Queen).

Powers of new
Legislative
Councils

Though the jurisdiction of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General extended over the whole of British India, in certain important matters it was not empowered to introduce any change in Acts passed by Parliament. In an emergency the Governor-General was given the power to issue a law in the form of an Ordinance without placing it before the Legislative Council. No such power rested with the Governor-General previously.

The powers of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils were limited to legislation. They had no control, direct or indirect, over administrative and financial matters; members were not permitted the right of interpellation for eliciting information on any matter. The Act of 1861 did not actually use the expression 'Legislative Council'; the expression used was 'Meeting of the Council for the purpose of making laws and regulations' (here 'Council' refers to 'Executive Council'). Wood was of the view that no Legislative Council existed separately, *i.e.*, there was no

separate body known as Legislative Council; it was merely an extended form of the Executive Council for the specific purpose of legislation.

The main objective of the Act of 1861 was reform of the system of legislation. However, it introduced a basic change in the procedure relating to the functions of the Governor-General's Executive Council. Under the previous Acts, the duties of conducting the administration of India rested with the Governor-General and his Executive Council jointly, *i.e.*, neither the Governor-General nor any member of his Executive Council had any special rights or responsibilities in relation to any particular department of administration. The decision which was arrived at jointly after they had met together and discussed any issue guided the conduct of administration. All Government papers and documents were brought to the notice of each member of the Executive Council and Government policy was decided upon after detailed discussions in the meetings of the Executive Council. This procedure was applicable not only to important matters, but to routine affairs also. Naturally, the procedure was cumbersome and time-consuming. The Act of 1861 provided that the Governor-General could, for the more convenient transaction of business in the Executive Council, lay down rules or issue instructions'. Armed with this authority, Canning distributed administrative work Department-wise among the different members of the Executive Council; thus, for example, one member was given the Home portfolio while Finance went to another. Each member in charge of a particular Department was directly responsible for the efficient working of that Department, though the practice of taking a joint decision in all important matters pertaining to each Department and in respect of policy formulations was not given up.

'Empress of India' (1876): The occupant of the British throne carries the title of 'King' if male and 'Queen' if female. When Victoria assumed charge of the administration of India, she became the 'Queen' of India also. In 1876, Parliament, as pro-

posed by the Conservative Prime Minister, Disraeli, passed the *Royal Titles Act* authorising the Queen to adopt any title she might choose in relation to India. Accordingly she assumed the title of 'Empress of India'. On 1st January 1877, in a ceremony held with regal pomp and splendour at Delhi under the presidency of the Governor-General, Lord Lytton, this new title of the Queen was formally proclaimed. This did not bring any change in the internal administration of British India, but a fundamental change was introduced in the relationship between the Indian Princes and the Government of India. So long they were 'allies' of the Government of India; they now came under the authority of the 'Empress of India' and became her vassals. As a result, the control of the Paramount Power over them was further tightened in practice.

It was only in 1947 that this particular title of the British Royalty was abolished under the Indian Independence Act. The then 'King' of England then became the 'King' of the two 'Dominions' of India and Pakistan also. Under the new Constitution of India introduced on 26 January 1950, India was transformed into a 'Republic'; the constitutional relationship between the British Royalty and India came to an end. India, however, recognized the British Crown as the 'Head of the Commonwealth' of which she became a member.

Growth of political consciousness : Western education began to spread from the second decade of the nineteenth century. In the very year of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' (1857), Universities on Western models were set up in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. In 1882 Lahore and in 1887 Allahabad got their own Universities. Schools and Colleges began to increase in number in different regions of the country. Western education led to the birth of political consciousness among its beneficiaries. In fact, it was due to higher education that there was the birth and growth of nationalism based on Western ideals among the educated community. From the time of Raja Ram Mohan Ray onwards the increasing influence of nationalism in Indian history is quite apparent.

Effects of Western education

Even before the 'Sepoy Mutiny' several Political Associations had come into existence in Calcutta, Bombay, Poona and Madras. At the time when the Charter Act of 1853 and the Indian Councils Act of 1861 were being framed, these Political

Associations raised various demands and began to press the British authorities with appeals and petitions. These drew the attention of those in authority, as also of the people, to various problems associated with legislation and administration. The newspapers under Indian management co-operated with them in such matters.

All such Political Associations were dominated by the higher-ups in society, particularly the zamindars. Gradually in the sphere of politics the influence of the zamindars suffered an eclipse while the educated middle class grew in importance. Already the *Hindu Mela* established by Nabagopal Mitra (1867) was preaching the cult of nationalism. As the mouthpiece of the middle class, Surendra Nath Banerjee set up a political body, the *Indian Association*, in Calcutta in 1876. This body was more progressive than its earlier counterparts. The *Indian National Congress* was founded in 1885 from a similar point of view.

Indian Councils Act (1892) : Under the Indian Councils Act, 1861, five Legislative Councils had been set up, one at the Centre (1861) and one each in Madras (1861), Bombay (1861), Bengal (1862), and the North-Western Provinces (1886). The composition and functions of these bodies were not in keeping with the

growing political consciousness of the educated community. These Councils had members too few in number ; it was impossible for them to

adequately represent the interests and viewpoints of the different regions and classes. Secondly, the still smaller number of Indians in these Councils were not elected representatives of the people, but nominees of the alien Government. Such a narrow base could hardly produce a representative assembly. Thirdly, as the Councils had no power in such vital matters as administration, taxation and expenditure from Government funds, these could not in any way voice the real grievances of the people. As there was no

right of interpellation, there were no opportunities also for eliciting information in respect of administrative affairs and attracting the attention of the Government to any matter.

The Political Associations and the Indian newspapers were fully aware of these three shortcomings in the system of legislation. They had three demands : the Councils should have more members ; among the non-official members some should be elected while others might be nominated ; the Councils should be allowed the right to discuss the Budget and the right of interpellation in respect of administrative matters. Such demands strengthened after the birth of the Congress (1885). The question of reforms in the Legislative Councils found the most important place in the presidential addresses and the resolutions adopted in the annual Congress sessions.

Demands of
Indians

Two Governors-General, Lord Northbrook and Lord Ripon, appreciated the necessity of fulfilling the political aspirations of the educated class at least to some extent. Lord Dufferin, on the whole, agreed with them, though when speaking in public he ridiculed the educated community as a 'microscopic minority'. He reviewed the demands of the Political Associations and made certain recommendations to the Secretary of State for India. As a result, Parliament passed in 1892 the second *Indian Councils Act*. Lord Lansdowne, who was then the Governor-General, issued necessary Regulations for implementation of the Act.

This Act revised the Act of 1861 and made three new provisions. Additional members of the Councils were increased in number. In the Council at the Centre, the number was fixed at a maximum of 16 and a minimum of 10. In the Provincial Councils, the maximum number was fixed at 20 in respect of Madras, Bombay and Bengal, and 15 in respect of the North-Western Provinces. Secondly, the basic principle of having members (other than *ex-officio* members) nominated by the Government was retained. But the Governor-General was entrusted with powers to frame Regulations setting down the conditions for such

nomination. With the approval of the Secretary of State for India, Lansdowne prescribed conditions which indirectly recognised the principle of election. It was provided that self-governing bodies like Municipalities and District Boards, as also Universities, would elect a specified number of persons; if such elections were approved by the Governor-General, the Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor, then the persons concerned would become nominated members of the Councils. In this way, members enjoying the confidence of the people would be admitted to the Councils. Thirdly, there was two-fold increase in the rights enjoyed by the members of the Councils. In financial matters, they were accorded the right of discussion, though not the right to move any Resolution or press for voting. They were also given the right of interpellation in matters of public interest.

This Act, however, could not satisfy the nationalists. It was the object of criticism in every session of the Congress. But distinguished nationalist leaders like Ferozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Asutosh Mukherjee, Rashbehari Ghose, Anandamohan Basu, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendra Nath Banerjee demonstrated their oratorical powers and political acumen in the Councils brought into being under the Act. The proceedings of these Councils bore ample testimony to the capacity of the educated Indians as Parliamentarians and patriots.

New trends in politics : The Act of 1892 remained in force till 1909. During this period politics in India showed three new trends. In the first place, the Congress split into two wings—Moderates and Extremists. The Surat session of the Congress in 1907 sharply brought their differences into the open. Secondly, secret societies were formed in Bengal and Maharashtra so as to achieve political rights through violent methods. Those who were associated with these societies are usually known as 'Militant Nationalists'. They had links with the Congress Extremists.

Thirdly, the majority of the Muslim leaders tried to extract special rights from the alien Government by opposing the Congress. In 1906, led by Aga Khan, they met the Governor-General,

Lord Minto, and demanded 'Separate Electorate' for the Muslims in the elections to the Legislative Councils. Minto conceded this demand and assured them that the 'political rights and interests of the Muslims as a community' would be safeguarded. In this way, the policy of isolating the Muslims from the mainstream of Indian nationalism was given distinct shape. This policy aimed at weakening the Congress and making it tone down its political demands. Elated by Minto's assurances, communalist leaders assembled at Dacca only a few months later and founded the All-India Muslim League (1906).

Communal
politics

Morley-Minto Reforms (1907-1909): The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, hoped that the Congress would soon peacefully collapse ; but his expectations were belied. In spite of the in-fighting between the Moderates and the Extremists, the Congress remained a powerful organisation. But he delivered a blow to nationalism by partitioning Bengal (1905). Though this move fostered Hindu-Muslim differences in Bengal, nationalism was on the whole rather strengthened by the anti-Partition movement. The anti-British struggle became more vocal through the Swadeshi movement which was the reaction of the nationalists to the Partition.

Curzon's successor as Governor-General, Minto, set into motion a three-pronged policy. In the first place, with a view to isolating the Muslims from the Congress and making them turn to the British, he promised them communal electorate. Secondly, to weaken the Congress Extremists and the 'Militant Nationalists', he resorted to a policy of repression. Several leaders were imprisoned without trial, revolutionaries became the victims of police terror, and newspapers were gagged. Thirdly, he was well aware that mere repression could not do away with political discontent ; a minimum of political rights would have to be conceded at least to enlist the co-operation of the Congress Moderates.

Minto's policy

The Secretary of State for India, John Morley (later known as Lord Morley on his elevation to Peerage), belonged to the

Liberal Party of England. In fact, even among the Liberals, he was well-known as a Philosophical Radical. He was a disciple of the greatest Liberal leader of the nineteenth century, Gladstone. Among his literary achievements, *Life of Gladstone* occupied a distinguished place. Naturally, Morley was in favour of a liberal policy towards India. His associate in India, Minto, though a member of the Conservative Party, was not totally opposed to Indian nationalism like Curzon. Thus, both the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General agreed on a basic principle, and it was possible to translate that principle into action in mutual co-operation. They made a joint effort to remove political discontent through political concessions. That is why the constitutional changes made under their stewardship are known as Morley-Minto Reforms.

It was not necessary to change the existing laws to make Indians eligible for appointment to high posts. In 1907, two Indians (Krishnagobinda Gupta and Syed Hussain Bilgrami) were made members of the Council of India, *i.e.*, the Council of the Secretary of State for India. In 1909, an Indian (Satyendra Prasanna Sinha) was given the Law portfolio in the Governor-General's Executive Council. There was no precedent for appointment of Indians to such posts. The Charter Act of 1833 and Queen Victoria's Proclamation had promised that all posts would remain open to able Indians. Morley was the first to honour that promise.

It was necessary to initiate fresh legislation so as to increase the size and powers of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils. In 1909, Parliament passed the third *Indian Councils Act* moved by Morley. This introduced a wholesale change in the previous two Indian Councils Acts. The new Act gave more members to the Councils: the number was raised to a maximum of 60 for the Governor-General's Council, 50 for five provinces (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, East

Appointment of
Indians to high
posts

Act of 1909

Bengal and Assam) and 30 for two provinces (the Punjab and Burma). (After the Partition of Bengal, a new Council was set up for the newly-created province of East Bengal and Assam). Secondly, the principle of election was accepted openly. The members were divided into three categories : nominated Government officials, nominated non-officials, elected non-officials. In the Governor-General's Council, the Government officials formed an absolute majority ; in the Provincial Councils the nominated and the elected non-official members were together in a majority, though in Bengal the elected members were given the majority. Thirdly, in three respects—Budget, discussion of 'any matter of general interest', and interpellations—more liberal provisions were made.

The Regulations relating to elections were not included in the original Act. The Governor-General, by virtue of the powers vested in him, issued Regulations regarding delimitation of constituencies, qualifications of voters, etc. Separate provisions were made for different provinces and different communities. Under the Act of 1892, tax-payers could not vote directly ; elections were held through such bodies as Municipalities, District Boards, Universities, etc. The Act of 1909 gave direct voting rights to the tax-payers in a majority of instances. The promise which Minto had made to the Muslims in 1906 was kept ; Separate Electorate was introduced for them. The Indian nation was divided into two sections : Muslims and Non-Muslims. This divisive policy was in force till the end of British rule (1947).

The members of the Executive Councils of the Governors of Madras and Bombay were increased in number. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was given an Executive Council. The practice of inducting Indian members into the Provincial Executive Councils was introduced.

The Congress Moderates had on the whole accepted the Separate Electorate ; its pernicious effects these leaders were unable to foresee. They had instead been busy with some other defects of the electoral system. They did not give any deep

thought to the question as to how far their basic objective (*i.e.*, 'Swaraj' or 'Dominion Status' or self Government like that of Canada, Australia and other white Colonies) was likely to be fulfilled by the Morley-Minto Reforms. Morley stated that he was not prepared to see India as a Self-Governing Dominion, while Minto held that Representative Government on the Western model was not suitable for India. As such, there was no scope for cherishing any high hope regarding the political benefits of the Morley-Minto Reforms. Within a period of only seven years (1917), the British Cabinet and Parliament announced the policy of further constitutional reforms.

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919): The developments connected with the First World War (1914-18) in Europe influenced the political situation in India; Indian political aspirations gained a new impetus. The dissatisfaction about the Morley-Minto Reforms began to affect even the Congress Moderates. In 1916, Mrs. Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak founded the *Home Rule League* to strengthen the movement for self-government. That very year the Congress and the Muslim League concluded the *Lucknow Pact* and unitedly adopted a plan known as the *Congress-League Scheme* for self-government. The Extremist-Moderate differences in the Congress were patched up. At the other end, Indian revolutionaries inside the country and abroad intensified their efforts to get rid of British rule through violent methods and armed resistance.

In this changed situation, the British Cabinet was compelled to reorient its thinking about Indian political problems. On 20 August 1917, Edwin Samuel Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, made a very significant announcement in Parliament. The Morley-Minto Reforms had ruled out the possibility of Responsible Government in India. But it was stated in Montagu's announcement that 'progressive realization of responsible government' would be the political objective in India though the country would continue to be 'an integral part of the British

Empire'. The announcement also referred to another objective : 'increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration'. Montagu's announcement

For fulfilling the twin objectives, 'gradual development of self-governing institutions' would be undertaken. It was also emphasised that India would thus advance politically by 'successive stages'; which stage was to be reached at what time would depend on the decision of the British Government. This announcement was a total reversal of the thinking behind the Morley-Minto Reforms; the right of the Indians to proceed from the limited arena of the law-making Councils to the larger sphere of real self-government was explicitly recognised.

Montagu came over to India shortly after the announcement and in co-operation with the Governor-General, Lord Chelmsford, prepared an elaborate Report on constitutional reforms. (1918). The proposals contained in this Report were, with some alterations, embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919, passed by Parliament. The Act came into force from 1st January, 1920.

The Government of India Act, 1919: Under the provisions of this Act, the Governor-General's Council was totally transformed; for legislation in the Central sphere, a Legislature with two Houses was set up. The Upper House was named 'Council of State' and the Lower House was called 'Legislative Assembly'. Among the 60 members of the Council of State, 26 were the nominees of the Governor-General and 34 were elected. In the Legislative Assembly of 140 members, 100 were elected and 40 nominated by the Governor-General. Among the nominated members, Government officials did not exceed 26 in number. In the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, Separate Electorate had been described as 'a very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle'; yet the Act of 1919 retained it. This vicious electoral system became a permanent feature of Indian political

Central
Legislature

life. The Governor-General was empowered to issue Ordinances without the approval of the Legislature. The members of the Governor-General's Executive Council remained, as before, outside the authority of the Legislature; there was not even a beginning of a system of self-government in the executive sphere. However, the Legislature was given some control over the Budget; in regard to Resolutions also, it got more rights. Previously, the Governor-General presided over the Council; in the new system, the Legislative Assembly was allowed to elect its own President, though the President of the Council of State was nominated by the Governor-General.

In the Provincial Legislative Councils, 70 per cent of the members were elected and 30 per cent nominated by the Governor. Government officials were included among nominated members, but they could not be given more than 20 per cent of the seats earmarked for nomination. In the bigger provinces, total membership ranged from 111 at the minimum to 125 at the maximum; the number varied between a minimum of 53 and a maximum of 98 in the smaller provinces. Separate Electorate stayed.

Provincial
Legislative
Councils

The Councils could elect their own Presidents; previously the Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor presided.

The provincial administrative system was divided into two parts. Some Departments (*e.g.*, Law and Order, Finance) remained under the authority of the members of the Governor's Executive Council; the Legislative Council had no control over these Departments. These were known as 'Reserved Departments'. Some Departments (*e.g.*, Education, Health, Local Self-Government) were entrusted to Ministers. Previously there had been no such Ministers. They were appointed by the Governor from among the elected members of the Legislative Councils. They were responsible to the Legislative Council, *i.e.*, they had to resign in the event of the Council's refusal to endorse their actions. In this way, in the provincial sphere, 'Responsible Government' was introduced in respect of

Dyarchy

the Departments held by Ministers. These were known as 'Transferred Departments'. There were fundamental differences between the composition and responsibilities of these two sides of the Provincial Administration. This peculiar system was known as 'Dyarchy'. Of course, the Governor remained the final authority over both. Dyarchy was in force till 31 March 1937.

From the nationalist point of view, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms had three main drawbacks. In the first place, 'Responsible Government' was not introduced at the Centre even partially. Secondly, though this was to some extent introduced in the provincial sphere 'Dyarchy' was such a complicated arrangement that it was next to impossible to run it smoothly. The more important Departments were not placed under the Ministers. The Ministers were responsible for their respective Departments, but they had to depend on the Executive Council, particularly the Finance Department, for efficient discharge of these responsibilities. Thirdly, Separate Electorate having come to stay, communal politics had a dominant influence. It began to gather momentum and climaxed in the Partition of India in 1947. However, in spite of all these defects, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms deserve a particularly significant place in the history of British India. Though the Legislative Councils had been reformed thrice before this, the process of transfer of administrative powers had not been given even a start. The Act of 1919 was the first step in this direction, though the powers so transferred were limited to a part of the provincial administrative system.

Defects of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms

Local Self-Government : Local self-government on Western models had begun to be introduced in India even under the Company's regime. In the rural areas, there was the traditional Panchayat system ; this had become weakened in some provinces due to various reasons. Municipal arrangements had been introduced in the three Presidency cities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta—and in the district towns later on. By the time of the

'Sepoy Mutiny', Municipalities had started functioning in many urban centres. The municipal authorities were mostly nominated by the Government; there was as yet little scope for election by tax-payers. The Municipalities were set up only to provide some civic services to urban residents under official supervision and control.

In 1870, under Governor-General Lord Mayo, the Government of India adopted an important Resolution regarding self-government and this set in motion a sensible policy. The Resolution stated that '...local interest, supervision and care are necessary to success in the management of funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical charity and local public works'.

Mayo's policy This was really an admission that the success of local self-government depended on the active co-operation of the local people and not on the efforts of the Government officials only. The Government of India expected this policy to yield benefits on three counts. In the first place, self-government would gradually develop. Secondly, the Municipalities would stand to gain by escaping Government control to some extent and improving their affairs by their own efforts. Thirdly, there would be increasing opportunities for co-operation between Indians and Europeans in administrative matters.

Ripon further widened the scope of this policy and applied it liberally. A Government of India Resolution of 1882 spelled out the new policy. Ripon's aim was 'to advance and promote the political and popular education of the people and to induce the best and most intelligent men in the community to come forward and take a share in the management of their own local affairs and to guide and train them in the attainment of that important object'. He was not only interested in the improvement of education, health and local roadways. His greater objective was to prepare the 'best and most intelligent men in the community' for 'eventual' political progress. On the whole, he regarded spread of local self-government as a step towards extension of political rights. But in view of the

negative stand of the Secretary of State for India, Ripon's policy could be implemented only partially. The Secretary of State for India was not prepared to go to the extent that Ripon would have liked to go in relaxing Government control over the local self-governing bodies.

The Acts which came into force in 1883-84 made the policy of popular representation broad-based. As a result, the Municipalities came under the partial control of the tax-payers. Local Boards and Union Boards were set up in rural areas. Stress was laid on the elective process in the appointment of the office-bearers of these bodies. Government control was, of course, there; but it was considered better to exercise it from the outside rather than from the inside (that is to say, Government officials were not to be directly associated with these bodies as office-bearers but to exercise supervision from outside). Lord Chelmsford announced Government's policy of relaxing their control over the self-governing bodies. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report pointed out that in the management of the self-governing bodies, political training was ignored in favour of mere day-to-day work, that is to say, there was no progress towards self-government in keeping with Ripon's basic objective. The Act of 1919 made self-government a provincial subject and it was placed in charge of a Minister (*i.e.*, it was made a 'Transferred Department').

Appointment of Indians to high posts: During the Company's rule, the Court of Directors used to appoint top officers of the Company. The Charter Act of 1853 provided for recruitment through competitive examinations. Such examinations were held under the supervision of the Board of Control. The Government of India Act, 1858, transferred this power to the Secretary of State for India. This competitive examination was conducted in London. Normally, the more promising students of the Universities in England used to be successful in these examinations and get appointments in the Indian Civil Service.

Recruitment
through competi-
tive examination

There was no legal bar to Indians taking part in these examinations ; but at that time they could not, for a variety of reasons, take advantage of the system. Hindu social sentiment did not take kindly to crossing of the seas. To go all the way to England to take part in the examination was prohibitively expensive. The syllabus for the Civil Service Examination was prepared with an eye to the syllabii of the different British Universities. In spite of all these disincentives Satyendra Nath Tagore (an elder brother of Rabindra Nath Tagore) passed the Civil Service Examination in London in 1863. He was the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service. Thereafter, the syllabus was revised in such a way as to make it more disadvantageous for Indian candidates. Moreover, the upper age-limit was fixed in such a manner that it became next to impossible for young Indians to go to England for the examination. Still several Indians—including Surendra Nath Banerjea and Ramesh Chandra Dutt—came out successful.

Indian nationalists raised two demands. In the first place, the Civil Service Examination should not be held in London only, but also simultaneously in India. Secondly, Indians should not be put at a disadvantage through reduction of the upper age-limit. The matter began to be made an important issue from the closing years of the sixth decade. Towards the close of the next decade, the Indian Association, under the leadership of Surendra Nath Banerjea, began a strong movement in favour of these two demands. In 1877-78, Surendra Nath paid visits to some important cities of India and explained the significance of the demands regarding the Civil Service Examination in numerous speeches. In 1879, Lalmohan Ghosh went to London as a representative of the Indian Association and explained the views of the Indians on the Civil Service Examination in a large gathering there. Later, after its birth in 1885, the Congress assumed the leadership of the movement. The question of age-limit was more or less resolved : but for long, until the end of the First World War.

no steps were taken to conduct the Civil Service Examination in India.

To meet Indian objections in a limited way in respect of appointments to the Civil Service, a special arrangement was made during Lytton's administration under instructions from the Secretary of State for India. Its main purpose was to win over a powerful section of the Indian community to the Government side. New regulations were introduced in 1879. There was no change in the matter of the Civil Service Examination conducted in London. But every year several Indians were to be appointed to posts in the Civil Service without, however, holding any competitive examination. In making nominations, more stress used to be laid on pedigree than educational qualifications. These recruits received much less pay than those appointed through competitive examinations in London. They had also less scope for promotion. In this way, a new category was brought into being among the members of the Civil Service. It was known as the 'Native Civil Service' or the 'Statutory Civil Service'. As the results were far from happy, the system was abolished in 1889.

The Indians numbered very few among those coming out successful in the London Examination. The number of Indians in the Indian Civil Service was 42 in 1903 and 63 in 1913. In the year last mentioned, the total membership of the Indian Civil Service was 1371; so Indians comprised only 5 per cent.

In 1912, the British Government appointed the 'Royal Commission on the Public Service in India' under the presidentship of Lord Islington. Its report was published in 1917. The Commission proposed the holding of two competitive examinations every year in London and India with 25 per cent of the posts reserved for members appearing in India. As the First World War was still on, this proposal was not put into effect. In 1917, Montagu's announcement promised larger share of every branch of the administration to Indians. In the Montagu-Chelmsford Report,

Statutory Civil
Service

Mont-Ford
Reforms

33 per cent of the posts in the Indian Civil Service was proposed to be earmarked for Indians ; emphasis was at the same time put on staffing the Civil Service with a sufficient number of Europeans so as to keep administrative efficiency intact. After this, Civil Service Examinations began to be conducted in India also besides London, and gradually the Indian Civil Service absorbed an increasing number of Indians.

Economic policy : Railways : In discussing the economic policy of the Government of India, the extension of railways has a great relevance. In this country, railways were first envisaged by Governor-General Lord Hardinge I. At the time of Dalhousie, in 1853, the first railways were opened between Bombay city and a place called Thana. The next year Calcutta was linked with the coal mines in the Ranigunge area through railways. In 1856, Madras and Arcot were connected by rail. By 1859, eight Railway Companies were formed and plans were made for extension of railways, totalling 50,000 miles.

Building of railways This great undertaking began to take concrete shape only slowly. By the first half of this century, railways had been extended to all the provinces of India. In 1900, all the railways in India covered 24,760 miles.

In 1853, Dalhousie set two objectives for the building of railways. The first was military : an efficient transportation system for the movement of British forces between each and every part of the Indian empire must be built up, so that the army could be moved to any region at a very short notice according as necessity arose. The 'Sepoy Mutiny' proved to the hilt such a military necessity. The second objective related to commerce : conditions must be made promising for the investment of British capital and enterprise in India and easy transportation of raw materials from India's interior areas to the ports for eventual export to Europe, particularly England. Both these objectives were mostly fulfilled. The railways placed British military power in India on a very firm basis and created oppor-

tunities for the safe and very profitable investment of British capital in India. Moreover, by supplying the British factories with raw materials produced in India at a very small cost, the railways made it possible for the British industrialists to reap handsome profits.

Though the railways were not built with Indian interests in view, yet the improvement of the transportation system benefited India in a number of ways. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when the country was stricken with famines repeatedly, the railways made possible the expeditious despatch of food-grains to the distressed areas. The inhabitants of the different provinces were able to come into contact with each other; this brought national unity one step forward. The need for workshops for the railways advanced the age of machinery in India. Railway journeys liberalised food habits and lessened the rigidity of social customs. With the Princely States brought into the railway network, their relations with the British ruled provinces were placed on a more intimate footing.

Benefits conferred by railways

Several British commercial bodies (*e.g.*, East Indian Railway, Great Indian Peninsular Railway, Bombay-Baroda-Central India Railway, Eastern Bengal Railway) built the railways on the basis of contracts with the Government of India. Land for the railways used to be leased free to them for 99 years by the Government of India and a profit of 5 per cent on their total investments was guaranteed. In case of profits exceeding 5 per cent, half of the additional profit had to be surrendered to the Government. The management of these Companies used to be broadly under the control of the Government of India. After a minimum period of 25 years, the Government of India could take over the railways from any of the Companies after refunding the investment money. This system was known as the 'Guarantee System'.

Guarantee system

The Guarantee System made the Companies rather incauti-

ous in their spending. Whether the cost of laying the rails soared or money went down the drain due to defects in the management, or whether the number of passengers dwindled and less goods were carried—all these mattered very little to them. If profits fell below the guaranteed 5 per cent, there was the Government of India to bale them out with necessary compensation in terms of contract: *i.e.*, the Companies were paid from the revenues of India—the Indian tax-payers' money—the balance of their guaranteed 5 per cent profit.

As this system had put the Government of India to great losses, it was given up in 1869 and the Government themselves took over the responsibility for building new railways. But as a variety of reasons made the Government of India financially hard-up, the Guarantee System was revived in a new form. The Guarantee period and the rate of profit were reduced; the major portion of the additional profit was earmarked for the Government coffers. Even this arrangement did not yield the expected results. Then the Companies were given a variety of monetary inducements so as to make them take up the construction of branch lines.

For efficient management of the railways, a Railway Board was set up in 1905 under the Commerce and Industry Department of the Government of India.

Economic policy : Irrigation : It is essential for a Government to pay particular attention to the improvement of the irrigation system. In the Mughal times many canals had been dug in North India, but these had gone out of service in the eighteenth century for want of proper maintenance. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the efforts of the Company's Government had resulted in the construction of the Jumna and Ganges canals in North India, the Bari Doab canal in the Punjab and the Koleeroon, Godavari and Krishna canals in south India. Thereafter, the Government of India turned to the construction of railways and the irrigation system was increasingly neglected. Till 1902, the expenditure on irrigation was only one-ninth of that on the

railways. After the famines of 1897 and 1900, the Government of India woke up to the need for a sound irrigation system and set up a Commission to suggest improvements. It was improved somewhat on the basis of the Commission's recommendations. Any expenditure on irrigation could conceivably improve agriculture and lead to production of more foodgrains, but was not likely to benefit the Government directly, *i.e.*, put more money into the Government coffers. That is why the Government treated irrigation in such a step-motherly fashion. The picture was, however, entirely different in the case of the railways; here the British Companies were liberally subsidised because the railways played such a vital role in serving the needs of British capital and the Army.

Economic policy : Industry : The industrial policy of the Company's Government led to the destruction of India's age-old industries and made the Indian people totally dependent on agriculture. The British merchants began the process of replacing cottage industries with factory production on western models. This had resulted in a commercial, but not an industrial, revolution. In the second half of the nineteenth century, machinery and machine-made goods from England began to be exported to India; at the same time, some specialised industries were developed in this country. This two-pronged offensive entirely ruined the Indian cottage industry.

In the opinion of R. C. Dutt, it was because of Government policy that no industrial revolution occurred in India in the nineteenth century. The Government of India used to patronise import of British goods to the detriment of industry in India; England's interests counted far more with them than those of India. This was a natural feature of colonial rule.

In the first stage of industrial revolution, the engineering industry has to be assigned the pivotal role. But British capital in India was invested not in this basic industry but in some industries of lesser importance.

Indigo cultivation had begun in Bengal as early as the late eighteenth century under the patronage of British merchants. In the nineteenth century, indigo plantations spread all over Bengal and Bihar. Under the Charter Act of 1833, the British indigo-planters got ownership rights in land and full opportunity to tie down the cultivators to a vicious contract system. Their ruthless oppression reduced the cultivators to an extremely wretched condition. A heart-rending picture of the terrible fate of these cultivators has been depicted in the drama, *Nildarpan*, by Dinabandhu Mitra. In 1859-60, cultivators in Bengal rose in open revolt against the indigo-planters. After this, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh became the main centres of indigo cultivation. Gradually, indigo began to lose its export potentiality and accordingly its cultivation also came down.

During Bentinck's administration, the Government became interested in growing tea in Assam. In 1839, some merchants in London set up the 'Assam Company'. Increasing production of, and commerce in, tea led to the setting up of twenty Companies in London and Calcutta during the period from 1859 to 1865. In the seventies the Assam Company's dividends rose up to 35 per cent. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Assam Bengal Railway was built and the Chittagong port developed. This increased the commerce in Assam tea. Different tea gardens were merged to form big Companies. Much more British capital was invested in tea than in indigo.

Commerce in jute had already begun by the early years of the nineteenth century. The first jute mill in India was set up at Rishra near Calcutta in 1855 by an Englishman with the help of a Bengali. In 1859, an electrically-operated mill started functioning at Baranagar. In the seventies, the British jute merchants in Bengal competed in the international jute market with their counterparts of Dundee in Scotland. By 1895, the British had invested rupees 5.47 crores in the jute industry. Dividends from jute used to go up to 20 per

cent. The workers received meagre wages. The Secretary of State for India arranged for investigation into the matter. At the beginning of the First World War, the jute mills numbered 64 in all.

In the eighteenth century, Indian fabrics used to be exported to the European markets ; but in the first half of the nineteenth century, cheap mill-made fabrics from Manchester began to flood India, ruining thereby the indigenous handloom industry. In the sixties, Indian merchants with Indian capital laid the base of Western-type cotton industry. The centres for this new industry were Bombay and Ahmedabad. By 1861, thirteen cotton mills had been set up in this region. The construction of railways and the tariff policy of the Government of India were helpful to the Indian cotton industry. In 1890, India had 137 cotton mills, of which 94 were in the Bombay Presidency. In the early part of the twentieth century, the increase in the price of cotton, the tariff policy of the Government of India and the shrinkage of the Chinese market had adversely affected the development of the Indian cotton industry. Cotton fabrics

However, the Swadeshi movement greatly increased the sale of indigenous fabrics in Bengal.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, British merchants had laid the base of the steel industry in Bengal and the Madras Presidency ; but the quantity produced being quite small, machinery required for the railways and the cotton mills had to be imported from England. In the early part of the twentieth century, even Government patronage had not created the field for a viable steel industry. Steel

The delay in industrial revolution was mainly due to this.

The development of industry is inextricably bound up with coal. Though coal had already been found in Bengal at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, even half a century later, in 1854, only three coal mines had been operating. Even towards the close of the nineteenth century, Indian coal mines could not adequately feed Coal

the Indian railways: huge quantities had to be imported from foreign countries. The volume of production increased, however, early in the twentieth century.

In 1870, the first paper mill was set up in Bengal. Sometime later, production began at Lucknow and Poona. The modernisation of the leather industry began in 1854 in Madras. Later, Kanpur and Bombay became the main centres of this industry. Coffee was the monopoly of South India. Petroleum was produced in Burma and Assam. There were also manganese and mica industries.

A survey of the history of the major industries would show that excepting the cotton industry, in all other cases investment and management rested with the British and it was the British share-holders who reaped the benefits in the form of dividends. Secondly, industry was export-oriented.

Economic Policy: Taxes, Duties and Coinage: Receipts from land revenue used to comprise more than half of the total Government revenue. Production and sale of opium were a Government monopoly; this also contributed to revenues. Salt had its tax which even the poorest could not escape. Intoxicants also were taxed. The sale proceeds from the stamps used in courts and commercial transactions went to the Government coffers. Export duties were levied on many commodities. Income-tax was introduced after the Sepoy Mutiny.

The tariff policy was fixed with an eye to British interests. This was due to India's political subordination. In 1874, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce demanded the repeal of duties on British fabrics exported to India. The competition of Indian cotton mills in the Bombay Presidency had become a headache for the cotton industry in England. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury, was insistent that the demands of the Manchester cotton merchants should be conceded. The then Governor-General, Lord Northbrook, opposed this policy and resigned; but his successor, Lord

Lytton, carried out the instructions from the Secretary of State for India (1879). In this way, the Indian cotton industry was sacrificed at the alter of British interests on pressure from the Conservative Government in England.

In 1896, the Governor-General, Lord Elgin II, again pressurised by the Conservative Government in England, passed an Act which caused irreparable damage to the Indian cotton industry. Duties were imposed on fabrics produced in Indian mills at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. As a result, poverty-stricken Indians were compelled to pay higher prices for their fabrics and the Indian cotton mills were saddled with a burden which the mills in none of the European countries had to bear. Ramesh Chandra Dutt observed that, as an act of economic injustice, the Act of 1896 was without any parallel in any civilised country of the modern period. The volume of production in the Indian cotton mills came down as a result of this Act, with disastrous effects on the industry as a whole.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the then revenue system of the Government and the expansion of trade and commerce created a gradually increasing demand for ready money, but silver for coinage was not available to the extent necessary to meet this requirement. To tackle this difficulty, the Government passed an Act in 1861 Coinage with a view to increasing the circulation of paper money. But the result was not up to expectations.

After 1870, the Indian silver rupee began to fall in value in relation to the pound sterling of England. In 1873, the ratio of exchange was $22\frac{3}{4}$ pence per rupee. In 1893, this came down to 14.5 pence. This led to an increase in the amounts which India used to send to England as 'Home Charges', * for the 'Home Charges' were calculated on the basis of the value of the pound.

*Interests on Indian debts in England, interests on British capital invested in Indian railways, pension dues of Englishmen retired from service in India, cost of stores purchased in England for use in India—the amounts sent to England on all these counts were known as 'Home Charges'. In 1900, these amounts equalled the total revenue receipts of the whole of India.

In 1893, a new step was taken ; this increased the value of the rupee just a little, making the ratio go up to 16 pence per rupee. This exchange ratio was permanently fixed by an Act of 1899. This upgrading of exchange value increased, rather than decreased, the taxes on the Indian people. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ramesh Chandra Dutt and other nationalist leaders were vocal in opposing the measure.

Economic policy : Land Revenue Systems : In the middle of the nineteenth century, different types of land revenue system prevailed in different provinces. In Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Banaras and the 'Northern Circars' (included in Madras Presidency), there was the *zamindari* system based on the Permanent Settlement. Oudh had a *Talukdari* system similar in nature. The *Mahalkhari* system was prevalent in many areas of Uttar Pradesh ; though ownership of land was separate, Government revenues were paid jointly through the *Lambardars*. Delhi and the Punjab had the *Gramdari* system ; here also land was owned separately, but the revenues of each village were paid jointly. In the Central Provinces, there was the *Malguzari* system ; here the *Malguzar* paid directly to the Government. The *Ryotdari* system prevailed in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Here the *ryot* was allotted land for a fixed period (usually thirty years) on a fixed rent ; on completion of this period, settlement was made anew. In the *Ryotdari* areas, the Government rates were too high ; in the areas under the Permanent Settlement, these were the lowest.

In the areas under the Permanent Settlement, the relations between the tenant and the zamindar were usually governed by a mutual contract. During the Company's regime, the Government usually adopted a neutral stance on this point, though the law often favoured the zamindar. The Bengal Rent Act of 1859 somewhat curtailed the zamindar's rights in favour of the tenant. But the Act, as interpreted by the courts, safeguarded the zamindar's interests. The wiles of the zamindars gradually alienated and provoked the

tenants. In the early seventies there were peasant risings in some areas of East Bengal, particularly in the Pabna district. In 1879, a Rent Commission was appointed to conduct a probe into the condition of the tenants. At the time of Ripon, a Tenancy Bill was presented before the Imperial Legislative Council. This became the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, in a revised form at the time of Dufferin. This Act gave recognition to the tenant's rights to a great extent. Nearly a century after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, Government policy was explicitly oriented towards securing the tenant's rights.

Some Acts were passed to safeguard the tenant's rights in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. Under Curzon, the Punjab Land Alienation Act forbade the transfer of lands owned by peasants to money-lenders (1901). In 1908, an Act similar to the Bengal Act of 1885 was passed in Madras. In the Bombay Presidency, the Revenue Code of 1879 made the tenant's interests secure to some extent.

Economic Policy : Famine relief : During the Company's regime, there was no clear-cut Government policy for providing relief to famine-stricken areas ; when events compelled, relief was granted hesitantly, unsystematically and in dribblets. Within a half-century of the end of the Company's rule, more than twenty famines occurred in different parts of India. After the famine of 1861 in Uttar Pradesh, a Famine Commission was set up by the Government of India. This Commission did not formulate any guidelines for Government relief measures.

After the Orissa famine of 1866-67, another Commission was formed. This Commission made three main recommendations. In the first place, the Government would have to assume the responsibility for sending relief to areas affected by famines and take necessary financial measures to discharge this responsibility. Secondly, to prevent famines and to quickly despatch foodgrains to the affected areas, the transportation system would have to be improved (*e.g.*, new railways and roadways and canals would have to be built). Thirdly, to improve agriculture, the peasants

would have to be given permanent ownership rights in land and the irrigation system would have to be improved.

In 1876-78, famine occurred in the Madras Presidency, Hyderabad, Mysore and the southern areas of the Bombay Presidency; towards the closing stages it also spread to Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. In 1880, yet another Famine Commission was appointed. On the basis of the report of this Commission, a Famine Code was prepared in 1883. The Code laid down detailed guidelines for Government relief measures during famines.

In 1896-97, famines again raged in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, and another Famine Commission reiterated the recommendations of the Commission of 1880. While the report of the Commission was still under consideration of the Government, famine once again stalked through the major portions of the Bombay Presidency, the whole of Madhya Pradesh, the Punjab, Rajputana, the principalities of Central India, Baroda and most of the Nizam's Dominions. Curzon claimed that famine relief had to be extended to one-fourth of the total population of India. A new Famine Commission was appointed (1900). This Commission also more or less endorsed the recommendations of the Commission of 1880 and at the same time made some concrete suggestions regarding relief operations. All these suggestions were gradually incorporated into the Famine Code and acted upon in the provinces.

The question of relief during famines had been discussed from various angles at different times and relief operations had also been undertaken. But nothing was done to ensure that famines did not actually occur and that relief was not needed. The Commission of 1880 observed that agriculture had become the sole means of livelihood of the common people; so long as at least a section of this population was not provided with alternative means of livelihood, poverty would remain a problem and famine a distinct possibility. But the traditional cottage industries had been ruined and the new western-type industries were expanding only very slowly. That is why people had no option but to cling to agriculture for their very existence.

India's poverty : Grievances of Nationalists : The nationalist leaders held that British rule was responsible for the poverty of the people who depended solely on agriculture for subsistence. Their condition could improve if the rulers changed their outlook and sought the co-operation of the Indians in the spheres of legislation and administration. They were not opposed to British rule ; rather they accepted British rule as the will of Providence and as beneficial for India. However, they wanted the objective and the nature of British rule in India to be changed ; it was their belief that if only the British remained true to their own national heritage and ideals 'Un-British' rule while governing India, the Indians would have nothing to complain of. In their own country, the British had established a democratic system with Parliament as the supreme authority, recognised the rights of the individual, and made the administration attend to the well-being of the people ; but in India they had taken a different course. The results were a flourishing Britain and a poverty-stricken India. Accordingly, the Indian nationalists considered British rule in India as 'Un-British' and their objections were simply against this 'Un-British' character of the British regime.

It was Dadabhai Naoroji who first used the expression 'un-British' about British rule in India. He was one of the most prominent leaders of the Congress in its formative stages. He was for long a resident in England where he was a most vocal advocate of political rights for the Indians. He had been a member of Parliament. In 1876, before Congress had seen the light of the day, he published his famous book, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. Its

Naoroji

theme was the poverty of the Indian people under British rule. He showed statistically that even in a year of bountiful crops, the average income of an Indian amounted to only 20 rupees per annum. This figure was arrived at with reference to the year 1868. In another book, *Prosperous British India* by William Digby, it was observed that in 1899 the average income was 18 rupees per head per annum in India. In 1886, as President of the Congress, Naoroji observed that the benefits

which India had derived from British rule would be meaningless if the country sank in poverty. In 1906, again, as the Congress President, he pointed out that, had the British not unjustly imposed a heavy financial burden on India, more money could have been spared from the Indian revenues for spread of education and other welfare activities.

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, after retirement from the Indian Civil Service, wrote two most valuable books. *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule* and *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, on Indian economic problems. The two books came out respectively in 1901 and 1903. In discussing the economic consequences of British rule, he pointed out that removal of Indian poverty would depend on revival of industries, reduction of rates of land revenue, and greater utilisation of Indian revenues within India (i.e., reduction of the 'Home Charges'). In 1899, as Congress President, he spoke on the reasons for famines and explained the causal connection between the land revenue system and famines.

The two nationalist leaders of Maharashtra, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, exposed the harmful effects of British rule in India while discussing the economic condition of the people. Ranade stated that foreign domination exercised undesirable influence over the industry and commerce of the ruled. As a member of the Governor-General's Legislative Council, Gokhale was ever alert in defending India's economic interests during debates on the Budget. As the Congress President in 1906, he backed the Swadeshi movement with the observation that it was both a political and an economic movement and would imbue the people with the urge for economic betterment.

CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN AND FRONTIER POLICY

First Anglo-Afghan War : In 1818, the rule of the descendants of Ahmad Shah Abdali in Afghanistan was ended by the Afghan Barakzai Chiefs, who established their sway in different parts of that country. One among them, Dost Muhammad, became the Amir of Kabul in 1826.

In the third decade of the nineteenth century, hostility towards Russia began to be a powerful element in England's foreign policy. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, held the view that Russia would extend its influence in Persia and Afghanistan and gradually pose a danger to Britain's empire in India. England's fear
of Russia

In 1837-38, Persia attacked Herat under Russian instigation. Situated on the borders of Persia and Afghanistan. Herat was regarded as the gateway to India from the north-west. The occupation of Herat by Persia would have virtually placed this strategic city under Russian control. But the Afghans, guided by a young British officer, successfully repulsed Persia and saved Herat. The danger of Russian advance towards the north-western frontier of India was thus averted for the time being.

Lord Auckland was the Governor-General at that time. Under instructions from the Court of Directors, he sent Alexander Burnes to Kabul for discussions on trade and commerce. The real purpose of Burnes's mission was to come to a political settlement for preventing infiltration of Persia and Russia into Afghanistan. Dost Muhammad, on his side, was ready to respond, but as a price demanded the Company's help against Ranjit Singh for re-occupying Peshawar. That strategic frontier city had been brought under Sikh rule by Ranjit Singh. Auckland, however, was not prepared to go to the extent of alienating the Company's powerful Sikh ally for courting the Amir's favour. Dost Muhammad now leaned towards Russia.

Auckland was alarmed by the change of attitude in Kabul. He determined to oust Dost Muhammad and put Shah Shuja, a descendant of Ahmad Shah Abdali, on the throne of Kabul. He made this move because of his calculation that with an Amir who was an ally of the British, the Russians would get no foothold in Afghanistan. Shah Shuja had reigned in Kabul for several years; driven out by enemies, he settled at Ludhiana in the Punjab as a pensioner of the British. He lacked in enthusiasm, initiative, power of judgement and, above all, in finance. Auckland considered such a worthless person a fit rival for Dost Muhammad and entered into a treaty with him. Ranjit Singh was a party to this treaty (1838). It was decided that the combined strength of the British and Ranjit Singh would place Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. After the Persian reverse at Herat, the British had no reasonable ground for apprehending any Russian threat; yet it was decided to oust Dost Muhammad through war. Auckland declared that Afghanistan would have to be made a friendly ally instead of an unfriendly power, and a permanent barrier was to be placed on the north-western frontier to prevent the mounting of any attack on India.

In 1838, the British army was sent to Afghanistan through Bahawalpur, Sind, Baluchistan and the Bolan pass. The Sikhs advanced by way of Peshawar and the Khaibar War pass. Kandahar and Kabul were occupied. Shah Shuja entered Kabul; Dost Muhammad surrendered and was sent as a prisoner to Calcutta.

Even though they won the war, the British did not succeed in their aims. Shah Shuja, now placed on the throne of Kabul, could not enlist the sympathy of the Afghans. The freedom-loving Afghans were not prepared to accept a ruler dependent on foreign bayonets. In 1841, the angry Afghans took up arms against the British. They were led by Akbar Khan, a son of Dost Muhammad. Burnes and some other British officers were murdered. The routed British troops retreated from Kabul (1842). On their way to India, they were wiped out by snow,

storm and Afghan bullets. Though Kabul fell, Kandahar and Jalalabad were successfully defended by a British general. Shah Shuja was assassinated. However, the Company's friendly relations with the Sikh kingdom, the other partner of the tripartite pact, remained intact even after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839.

Amidst this disaster, Lord Ellenborough succeeded Auckland (1842). The British army recaptured Kabul and occupied Ghazni; however, the new Governor-General decided to leave Afghanistan to itself. He declared that 'to force a sovereign on a reluctant people would be.....inconsistent with the policy... of the British Government'. The British troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan (1842). Dost Muhammad returned to Kabul and re-established his authority.

In his Afghan War, Auckland was basically motivated by the desire for the security of the north-west frontier. It was his assessment that the safety of this frontier would not be jeopardized so long as the Amir of Kabul remained uncontaminated by Russian influence. But he failed to appreciate the importance of a rapport with Dost Muhammad, about whose friendly relations with the Russians he had an exaggerated idea. It was not in the least likely that Shah Shuja, who had been living as an exile in India for thirty years, would be able to exercise any control over the turbulent Afghans on his return to Kabul. Auckland failed to appreciate that the freedom-loving Afghans would look down on Shah Shuja, the British protege. The Sikhs did not co-operate sufficiently while the campaign was on. After the occupation of Kabul, some British officers and the British ranks in general had in diverse ways oppressed the local population. The war was the outcome of a mistaken policy. Military disasters followed inept handling at different stages. Though the Company paid dearly in men and money, it did not reap even the least benefit.

Auckland's
mistakes

Second Anglo-Afghan War: After his re-installation in Kabul, Dost Muhammad naturally remained unfriendly to the

British. When in 1849, the Punjab was made a part of the Company's territories, Afghanistan and British India became direct neighbours. After some time, Herat again faced the prospects of a Persian attack. Then Dost Muhammad entered into alliance with the Company (1855, 1857), with the result that he did not go against the British during the Sepoy Mutiny.

After the death of Dost Muhammad in 1863, civil war broke out on the issue of succession to the throne of Kabul. Uncertainty, political as well as military, prevailed for some years; at last

Sher Ali, a son of Dost Muhammad and his nominee for the succession, was firmly in the saddle as the Amir of Kabul (1868). During the fight for succession, the Governor-General, Sir John Lawrence, had adopted a policy of non-intervention. None of the contestants for the throne of Kabul received any political, military or financial assistance from him.

After ascending the throne, Sher Ali met the next Governor-General, Lord Mayo, at Ambala with a view to forging a permanent alliance with the British. No formal pact was signed; only verbal assurances of friendship were exchanged. Fixed annual pension, military assistance immediately on demand, definite guarantee of the rights of himself and his descendants on the throne of Kabul, and British recognition of his favourite younger son, Abdulla Jan, as his successor, to the exclusion of his elder son, Yaqub Khan—these were the terms of Sher Ali. Mayo did not agree to any of these; he did not think it advisable to tie down the British permanently with the fortunes of Sher Ali and his descendants. After some time, alarmed at the Russian advance in Central Asia, Sher Ali demanded definite guarantee of British help against Russia (1873). But the then Governor-General, Lord Northbrook, did not agree to make any such promise in view of instructions from the authorities in England.

The policy of the Government of India towards Afghanistan was always governed by the state of relations between England and Russia both in Europe and Asia. The history of two Anglo-

Afghan Wars bears ample testimony to this. The events of the two decades preceding the second Anglo-Afghan War were also closely linked with the fundamentals of British foreign policy.

During the administration of Lawrence (1864-69) Russia was extending territories and political influence in Central Asia. In 1865 Tashkent and in 1868 Samarkand and Bokhara were annexed by Russia. This forward policy was based on a wide-ranging objective. Russia hoped that the concern for the safety of their empire in India would restrain the British from opposing Russian interests in Europe. England was not unaware that Russia, firmly entrenched in Central Asia which met the north-western frontiers of India, could imperil the British hold on that country. The Russian advance in Central Asia. The Governors-General (Lawrence, Mayo, Northbrook) were also not complacent about this danger. In 1873, England and Russia entered into a treaty; Afghanistan's northern frontiers were more or less demarcated. But this did not put a stop to the extension of Russian influence in Central Asia. Khiva fell to the Russians, and Kaufmann, the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, began to correspond with Sher Ali.

At the time of Lord Northbrook, Sher Ali finally realised that there was no definite guarantee that the British would come to his assistance in the event of a Russian attack. He became displeased with the British for other reasons also. Lord Northbrook in his turn intimated his displeasure when Sher Ali put Yaqub Khan in custody and declared Abdulla Jan as his successor. Afghanistan and Persia were engaged in border disputes. The results of the mediation of the Government of India in the matter went against the interests of Afghanistan. Gradually, Sher Ali's correspondence with Kaufmann became more than a routine affair and, disillusioned with the British, the Amir leaned towards Russia. The presence of Russian agents in Kabul could not fail to draw the attention of the British.

Sher Ali's
displeasure

In 1874, there was a change of Cabinet in England; the

Conservatives replaced the Liberals, with Disraeli (later, Earl of Beaconsfield) taking the place of Gladstone as the Prime Minister. In foreign policy, the Liberals laid stress on non-intervention and caution while the Conservatives favoured an imperialistic policy. Disraeli aimed at a 'spirited foreign policy'. The policy that Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook had followed in regard to Afghanistan was that of the Liberals. The new Cabinet reversed this policy and the task of implementing the new policy fell on Lord Lytton (1876-1880), who succeeded Lord Northbrook as Governor-General. At first, he was guided in his Afghan policy by specific instructions from the British Cabinet, but later he embarked on his own on a policy of confrontation with Sher Ali, with no attempt at compromise. Thus he was, if not fully, at least to a great extent personally responsible for the second Anglo-Afghan War. Though the British Cabinet ultimately backed him, it did not conceal its displeasure at the consequences of his activities.

Lytton informed Sher Ali that if he agreed to receive a British Resident at Herat, the stipulations he had made at the time of Lord Northbrook would be accepted. Sher Ali replied that were he to accept a British Resident, he could not deny the same privilege to the Russians. Actually, he was not willing to accept any foreign Resident. Lytton was displeased with this reply; he deemed it an expression of the Amir's contemptuous indifference to British interests. Sher Ali was pointedly reminded that he was isolating Afghanistan from British alliance and support. His envoy was warned at Simla that if the Amir ranged himself against England British military power 'could break him as a reed'.

Not only in word but in deed also, Lytton stepped towards 'breaking' Sher Ali. He made a treaty with the Khan of Kalat in Baluchistan and occupied Quetta (1876). Quetta was strategically placed in a position to keep watch over the Bolan pass, one of the gateways to Afghanistan. It was natural for Sher Ali to apprehend that the occupation of Quetta was the first step

towards an advance to Kandahar. Again, the Maharaja of Kashmir was persuaded to allow the British to set up a military base at Gilgit which was in his territory. Gilgit occupies a place bordering the eastern frontier of Afghanistan. In fact, Lytton caused Sher Ali's kingdom to be ringed by British military forces on two sides. He was active in trying to ensure that Afghanistan was gradually isolated and weakened.

In the meanwhile, Russia and Turkey had been at war in Europe (1877). Russia's victory in this war alarmed Disraeli who feared that this would extend Russian influence in the Near East and thereby endanger British interests. So he prepared for war and arranged to bring Indian army units to Europe. But as a result of his diplomacy, Russia agreed to give up, without any fight, some of the fruits of its Turkish venture and accordingly the treaty of Berlin restored peace in Europe (1878).

Naturally, all these happenings in Europe had a bearing on Russian policy in Asia. Having had the worst of the diplomatic duel with England in Europe, Russia was bent on revenge in Asia. When a Russian emissary reached Kabul from Central Asia, Sher Ali made a treaty of alliance with him. Then Lytton requested Sher Ali to accept a British envoy in Kabul. Russia's policy was changed within a short time and its emissary left Kabul. So there was really no need to press for the acceptance of a British envoy in Kabul. But Lytton, with unseemingly haste, sent Sir Neville Chamberlain to Kabul. The British Cabinet did not endorse this move. Anyway, the Afghans did not allow the British envoy to enter the Khyber pass. Lytton declared that force had been applied against him to prevent his entry into Afghanistan. After this, war began (1878).

Three British Army contingents entered Afghanistan through three separate routes. Sher Ali, turning to Kaufmann for help, received a dry reply; Russia chose to remain neutral while he was in danger. Unable to defend his kingdom, he fled to Russian Turkistan and died there sometime later (1879).
His son, Yaqub Khan, ended hostilities by the treaty of Gandamak (1879). By the terms of the treaty, Afghan

War and peace

foreign policy came under British control. It was arranged to post a permanent British Resident in Kabul and British Agents at Herat and other places on the frontier, and the three districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi were ceded to the British Empire. The aim with which Lytton had embarked on the war was, for the time being at least, fulfilled.

But the situation changed within a few months. To the freedom-loving Afghans, the British protege, Yaqub Khan, became as undesirable as had been Shah Shuja. The British Resident Cavagnari died at the hands of the Afghans (1879). Suspecting Yaqub Khan's complicity in the matter the British Government banished him to India. The British forces again occupied Kabul and Kandahar. At this stage, Abdur Rahman Khan, a son of Sher Ali's brother, who had been living under Russian protection, came back to Afghanistan and claimed the throne. Lytton resigned (1880) before Afghanistan's future was finally settled.

Lytton's resignation was due to a change of Cabinet in England. The Liberals returned to power defeating the Conservatives; Gladstone replaced Disraeli as Prime Minister. Foreign policy also immediately underwent a change. The new Governor-General, Lord Ripon, recognised Abdur Rahman as the Amir of Kabul mainly on three conditions. In the first place, the Amir would have no political relations with any foreign power other than the British. Secondly, Pishin and Sibi would remain under British control. Thirdly, the Amir would receive an annual pension from the British. The demand for acceptance of an English Resident in Kabul was given up. To weaken the Amir, Lytton had been preparing to separate Kandahar from Kabul. Ripon abandoned this scheme; the whole of Afghanistan became the domain of Abdur Rahman. This was not achieved without bloodshed. Ayub Khan, a son of Sher Ali, challenged Abdur Rahman's claim to the Afghan throne and defeated a British force at Maiwand; but he was finally routed both by the British and Abdur Rahman.

Like the first Anglo-Afghan War, the second one also had no valid causes. However, the second was not barren politi-

cally and militarily as had been the first. In the first place, the acceptance of British control over Afghan foreign policy proved an effective barrier to extension of Russian influence in that country. The north-western frontier of India was at long last free from the shadow of Russian expansionism. Secondly, British control over strategically important Kalat and the military base at Gilgit increased British military power in the sensitive border region. Lord Lytton had made agreements with the Khan of Kalat and the Maharaja of Kashmir keeping in view the possible conflict with Sher Ali in future. Thirdly, it was as a result of this war that British Baluchistan was created. Results of war Quetta and the districts of Pishin and Sibi taken from Afghanistan formed parts of this province.

Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia : Though Russia could no longer expect to play a part in Afghan politics, its advance in Central Asia continued unchecked. After important places such as Khokand and Merv had been absorbed by Russia, a joint Russo-British Commission settled the dispute regarding the demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan in 1887. Already by this time there was a near-clash between the British and the Russians at Panjdeh (1885). In 1895, another pact recognised the river Oxus as the southern boundary of the Russian Empire in Central Asia.

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 put an end to the century-old rivalry between England and Russia and established *entente* between the two. Russia recognised Afghanistan as beyond its sphere of influence. It was arranged that relations between Russia and Afghanistan would be conducted through the British Government.

Third Anglo-Afghan War : After the death of Amir Abdur Rahman in 1901, his son, Habibullah, ascended the throne. He entered into a fresh treaty of alliance and maintained good relations with the Government of India. He did not involve himself in the anti-British conspiracy of the Germans during the First World War. In 1919, after his death, his son, Amanullah, be-

came the Amir and invaded British territory. This conflict was a brief affair ; its pace was very rapid. By two successive treaties (1919, 1921), Amanullah brought the fighting to a close and entered into new relations with the Government of India. Afghanistan became free from British tutelage in its foreign relations.

In 1929, Amanullah had to quit his throne when revolution broke out. The Government of India did not interfere in this internal affair.

Tribes of the North-West Frontier: The north-west frontier, *i.e.*, the region lying between Afghanistan and India, is the abode of turbulent mountain tribes. Separate tribes lived under different chieftains. They recognised the authority neither of the Amir nor of the Government of India and raided the territories of both for plunder. In the mountain terrain, the scope for making both ends meet is necessarily very limited ; they had, therefore, no option but to descend on the plains as marauding hordes. The Government of India had to resort to various devices to keep them in check. The chieftains were given monetary inducements to keep them friendly to the British. On the other hand, punitive expeditions were also sent as counter-measures against their depredations.

The frontier problem had two aspects : to put a stop to the pillage by the mountain tribes and to try to enlist the co-operation of the Amir in tackling these tribes by ascertaining exactly how far the Amir's sphere of influence extended. In 1892, Sir Mortimar Durand made a pact with Amir Abdur Rahman. In the mountain regions a demarcation line indicated the respective spheres of influence of the Amir and the Government of India ; it is known as the 'Durand Line'. The Amir promised not to interfere in any matter relating to the mountain tribes residing within the sphere of the Government of India.

In 1897-98, when Lord Elgin II was the Governor-General, there was a widespread revolt among the frontier tribesmen. Some among the top Government of India officials were in favour of extending British authority over the mountain tracts. They

were known as the 'Forward School'. The independent-spirited tribesmen naturally opposed any such policy. After the revolt had been crushed, Lord Curzon, the next Governor-General, took an important step in order to properly handle matters relating to the tribesmen. He formed a new province by attaching some frontier areas to some districts separated from the Punjab. This was known as the 'North-West Frontier Province'.

Third Anglo-Burmese War: Three provinces of Burma (Arakan, Tenasserim, Pegu) had been annexed after two wars during the East India Company's regime. Upper Burma, however, remained an independent kingdom. Mindon occupied the throne after the second war at the time of Lord Dalhousie. He was very anxious for the recovery of Pegu, but he found that the British Government was not prepared to make any concession in this matter. He made persistent efforts to open diplomatic relations with foreign countries—France, Italy, Russia, Persia. His purpose was to free his country from British political influence. But he was very cautious in his internal policy and did not give any offence to the British Government. By two commercial treaties (1862, 1867) he offered valuable commercial privileges to British subjects trading in Upper Burma. He accepted a British agent at his capital (Mandalay), but this official intercourse was cut off towards the end of his reign.

Mindon was succeeded in 1878 by his son Thibaw, a young man of twenty, who had no political training or administrative experience. He sealed his doom by renewing and strengthening political and commercial relations with France. His envoys visited Paris and concluded commercial treaties. The British Government scented danger. At that time the relations between England and France were strained; they were rivals in the colonial sphere. France was establishing her control over Indo-China. England could not tolerate the extension of French influence to Upper Burma which lay very close to two British provinces—British Burma and Assam.

The British alarm was increased when Thibaw granted the concession of some ruby mines in his territory to a French Company. A dispute between a British Company (Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation) and the Burmese Government, relating to some royalty on timber due by the former to the latter, led to war. The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, sent a British force which occupied Mandalay almost unopposed (November, 1885). Thibaw surrendered; Upper Burma was annexed in January, 1886.

The British merchants had been clamouring for the annexation of Upper Burma for many years because they wanted to extend their trade. Thibaw's fall was due not only to the British suspicion of France but also to the British policy of commercial expansion.

Tibet: Towards the close of the nineteenth century, Tibet, though nominally under China, was virtually independent. This was due to the weakness of the Manchu dynasty of China. The Dalai Lama, the head of a monastic order, was the ruler of Tibet. The land was virtually without any contact with the outside world.

Warren Hastings had sent a British envoy to Tibet; but this did not lead to any political relations between British India and that country. It was only long afterwards, towards the end of the nineteenth century, that there was a beginning of such relations. In 1887, Tibet attacked Sikkim, a protectorate of India, but this was repulsed by the British forces. A few years later (1890, 1893), matters relating to Tibet's frontier and commerce were settled by treaty between the British and China, for England regarded Tibet as a country under the suzerainty of China. But Tibet did not abide by the treaty terms; the Tibetans did not recognise Chinese suzerainty and did not consider their country bound by any treaties entered into by China on its behalf.

During Curzon's regime there were noticeable attempts at establishing links between Russia and Tibet. A Mongolian named Dorjjeff was the key personality behind such moves. He was a subject of Russia and visited that country, possibly at the

request of the Dalai Lama. It is not clear whether Russia encouraged any such move, but Curzon considered that events were moving towards the establishment of a Russian foothold in Tibet. He determined to forestall any such possibility as he was of the opinion that any extension of Russian influence on the northern frontiers of India was likely to affect adversely the interests of the British Empire. One of his major aims was to extract advantages for extension of British trade in Tibet.

Curzon's policy

Curzon secured the approval of the British Cabinet for despatching a British Mission to Tibet, but himself laid down the guidelines for the Mission. Sir Francis Younghusband, leading a contingent of British troops, reached Lhasa, the capital of Tibet (1904). Tibetan resistance *en route* resulted in bloodshed. Younghusband compelled the Tibetans to agree to harsh treaty terms, but ultimately most of the terms had to be revoked on instructions from the British Cabinet. The only permanent result of this expedition was the setting up of a trade post at Gyantse.

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 included three clauses about Tibet. In the first place, political relations of England and Russia with Tibet were to be conducted through China, *i.e.*, Tibet was to continue to be under Chinese suzerainty. Secondly, neither England nor Russia was to occupy any part of Tibet. Thirdly, neither England nor Russia was to intervene in the internal affairs of Tibet.

Later developments

In 1914, there was a conference at Simla between the representatives of the Chinese Government, the Tibetan Government and the Government of India with a view to demarcating the boundary between Tibet and India. As a result, a line of demarcation known as the 'McMahon Line', named after Sir Henry McMahon, the representative of the Government of India at the Conference, was drawn up.

Taking advantage of the Revolution in China the Tibetans repudiated Chinese suzerainty in 1918.

CHAPTER VIII

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Founding of Universities : Western education, which was spreading in the first half of the nineteenth century, culminated in 1857 in the founding of three Universities. In 1853, Sir Charles Wood, the then President of the Board of Control, sent an Educational Despatch to the Government of India for improvement of education. This Despatch is of immense importance as a historical document, for the new educational system of India was based on the guidelines of this Despatch.

The main objective of the Despatch was the improvement and spread of education both in English and in the vernacular languages. In order to make this objective a reality, the necessity for adopting certain special measures was recognised. In the first place, a separate administrative department was to be set up in each province to look after education. Thus a Department of Education was set up under a Director of Public Instruction.

Wood's Despatch Between 1854-55 and 1866-67, this system was introduced in different provinces. Secondly, three Universities were to be founded in the three Presidency cities (Calcutta, Madras, Bombay). Thirdly, training arrangements were to be made for school teachers. Fourthly, Government schools and colleges were to be increased in number according to necessity. Fifthly, primary and secondary schools were to be increased in number. Sixthly, the system of providing Government grants-in-aid to the private schools for their efficient management was to be introduced. Impartiality was to be observed in the matter of religion while sanctioning such grants-in-aid. Meritorious students were to be encouraged with scholarships. English was to be the medium of instruction at the higher stages and the vernacular languages at the lower stages. Government was to be fully sympathetic in the matter of female education.

In 1854, the few colleges which provided higher education existed in isolation; these did not function under any central authority. Only the Government colleges were under the Council of Education. The standards of education and examination varied from college to college. There was no arrangement for awarding degrees to the students in recognition of their success in examinations. As higher education had, on the whole, no broad-based and self-contained character, it was not improving and spreading to the extent desirable. To change this situation, Wood proposed the setting up of Universities. The Despatch pointed out that it was high time that Universities were set up to impart education methodically in different branches of arts and science and award degrees and other 'marks of honour' to deserving students. These Universities were to confine themselves, on the model of the London University, to preparing the syllabi, conducting the examinations and awarding degrees to the successful candidates. The Universities were not to assume direct responsibility for teaching: this duty was to be entrusted to the affiliated colleges. Any question pertaining to religious faith was not to be the subject-matter of any examination.

Objectives of
Universities

In accordance with this Despatch, three Acts were passed in 1857 by the Governor-General's Legislative Council. Lord Canning was the Governor-General. Three Universities were set up in terms of these three Acts. The Calcutta University was founded on 24 January 1857, the Bombay University on 18 July 1857, and the Madras University on 5 September 1857; thus the Calcutta University is the oldest University in India in the modern period. The whole of North India, Central India and British Burma were under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University. The jurisdiction of the Bombay and Madras Universities were confined to the respective Presidencies and the adjacent Princely States. Later, in 1882, the Punjab University was set up at Lahore and the Allahabad University was set up in 1887.

Five Universities

The responsibility for conducting the affairs of the Univer-

sities rested in each case on a Chancellor, one Vice-Chancellor and a body known as the Senate comprising a prescribed number of members. The Governor-General was the Chancellor of the Calcutta University, the Government control over Universities Chancellors of the Bombay and the Madras Universities were the Governors of the respective Presidencies, and the Chancellors of the Punjab and the Allahabad Universities were the Lieutenant-Governors of the respective Provinces. The honorary Vice-Chancellors came from among either top Government officials or High Court Judges. The first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University was Gurudas Banerjea, a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. The Chancellor appointed the Vice-Chancellor and nominated the Fellows or members of the Senate. Indian Fellows of the Senates were too few in number. The Universities Curzon's Act were in every sense under full Government control. Such control was further tightened by the Indian Universities Act of 1904. This Act was sponsored by Lord Curzon. But in spite of formidable legal restrictions, Sir Asutosh Mukherjee displayed magnificent skill and firmness in safeguarding the autonomy of the Calcutta University as its Vice-Chancellor.

Spread of higher education : After the birth of the Universities, higher education naturally spread. In the first fourteen years, 850 and 151 candidates were awarded B.A. and M.A. degrees respectively. In the succeeding eleven years, the numbers rose to 2434 and 385 respectively. Among the first three graduates of Calcutta University was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. There were gradual increases in the numbers of colleges as also of students.

In 1882, Lord Ripon set up an Education Commission with the well-known civil servant and historian, Sir William Hunter, as Chairman. The Commission was to ascertain how far the policy enunciated in the Despatch of 1854 had been implemented. Three principal recommendations were made by the Commission regarding higher education. In the first place, the Hunter Commission

Government colleges should gradually be handed over to non-official managements. Secondly, private colleges should be helped financially through grants-in-aid. Thirdly, to introduce variety in college education, courses should be provided in various branches of arts and science.

At the beginning of the present century, 17,500 students stood enrolled in the arts and science courses of 145 colleges. Though education had spread quantitatively, the qualitative improvement was not up to expectations. To thoroughly study this problem, Lord Curzon set up the Indian Universities Commission in 1902. Gurudas Banerjee was one of the members of this Commission. The Act of 1904 was based on some of its recommendations. The protests of the newspapers and the Congress against this Act attracted the attention of the people to the harmful effects of Government control. Even the apprehension that this Act would stand in the way of the spread of higher education was widely voiced. However, this apprehension did not materialise. Curzon's Act was in force in Bengal from 1904 to 1953. During this half-century, numerous new colleges came into being and the number of students also multiplied beyond expectations.

Female Education : In the first half of the nineteenth century, the upper echelons of the Indian society and the Company's Government, though interested in the spread of English education, were in general indifferent about female education. In 1819, the Female Juvenile Society arranged for education of girls in Calcutta. Radhakanta Dev and David Hare co-operated with the Society. Sometime later another body, the Ladies' Society, set up some schools for girls in the extensive region from Calcutta to Allahabad. The Christian missionaries were in the forefront of all these endeavours. Fearing that education imparted under their auspices would lead to the infiltration of Christian influence into the Hindu society, the higher circles of the Hindus were averse to female education. But gradually the progressive section among them came to appreciate the necessity

for female education.

J. E. Drinkwater Bethune remains an immortal figure in the history of female education. He was a highly-placed official, the Law Member of the Government of India. Knowing fully well that no Government patronage would be extended, he still set up the Calcutta Female School in 1849. The school at first had 11 students, reduced later to 7 only. Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Madanmohan Tarkalankar helped Bethune, who used to spend Rs. 800 per month for the school from his pay.

In the Despatch of 1854, the necessity for female education was clearly recognised and sanction of grants-in-aid to girls' schools recommended. After Bethune's death, Government took charge of the school founded by Bethune in 1856. In the annual report of the school for 1862-63, its name was shown as Bethune School.

In 1855, encouraged by Sir Frederick Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar set up twenty girls' schools in four districts. But as Lord Canning was not in favour of spending Government money on female education, these schools did not survive for long. Thereafter, Brahmo leaders like Keshab Chandra Sen made efforts to spread female education. Numerous girls' schools were set up by local societies in the districts of Hooghly, Dacca, Faridpur, Bakharganj, Mymensingh, Tripura and Sylhet.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Bengali girls invaded even the limited sphere of higher education. In 1883, Chandramukhi Basu and Kadambini Ganguli were awarded the B. A. degree. They were the first Bengali female graduates. In 1888, the Bethune school was upgraded to a college. Previously, girl students were not admitted to the Calcutta Medical College; in 1881, this bar was removed.

The Hunter Commission (1882) had remarked that female

education was still in a state of utter backwardness and that Government measures were essential to improve the position. The Commission recommended that girls' schools should be aided from the funds of the Government and self-governing bodies like Municipalities etc. After this, female education received increasing financial patronage from Government.

To encourage women to take to education, the Hunter Commission rules and regulations in respect of University examinations were relaxed for them. Still, in 1906-07, the colleges in Bengal had only 21 female students, while in the high English schools and the middle English schools they numbered 680 and 1776 respectively. Early in this century the total percentage of females associated with education was only 2.49.

The above remarks apply only to Bengal. The other provinces were still more backward in female education. In 1901-02, the whole of India had only twelve colleges for females and the students numbered only 177 in all. Except in Bengal and Madras, the high English schools for girls in the other provinces were managed mainly by the Christian missionaries.

Vernacular education: Before the introduction of English education, almost every village in Bengal had a primary school where lessons were given in reading, writing and simple arithmetic. Adam's Report, compiled in 1835, shows that there were no less than 1,00,000 primary schools in 1,50,748 villages. The medium of instruction was the mother tongue. The Muslim schools were known as maqtabas. The mother tongue and arithmetic were neglected in favour of religious education. The teachers of the rural primary schools received very meagre pay. The students usually completed their study in six or seven years. Any neglect of study or restlessness in behaviour on their part met with severe physical punishment. The primary schools included only boys. A superstition prevailed that any girl venturing to study ran the risk of future widowhood. In the entire Murshidabad district, Adam came across only nine women who knew the letters.

The Despatch of 1854 provided not only for improvement

of English education. Wood stressed in the Despatch that it would not do only to impart higher education to a few young men, but that every district should have such facilities as would make a great many men worthy members of society, whatever their actual place in life. Thereafter, there was a spurt in Government efforts at imparting primary education through the mother tongue. The Report of the Hunter Commission (1889) laid particular stress on primary education. It contained detailed study of and recommendations concerning financial aid to primary schools, their improvement through supervision, and such other matters. During the regime of Lord Ripon, when local self-government was extended, Local Boards and Municipalities were entrusted with the task of promoting primary education. The Hunter Commission had clearly stated that primary education would have to be regarded as 'instruction of the masses', that the mother tongue was to be the medium of instruction, and that at this level the learners would have to be taught such subjects as would be of help to them in earning their livelihood.

Education for professions : The Calcutta Madrasah and the Sanskrit College provided courses on medical training. In 1835, this was discontinued and the Calcutta Medical College was established for training in the Western medical sciences. The first student of Anatomy was Madhusudan Gupta. In 1844, four students of this college went to England for higher studies in medical sciences.

The Madras Medical School was upgraded to a Medical College in 1851. The Grant Medical College was founded at Bombay in 1845.

An Engineering College was set up at Calcutta in 1856. After functioning as a wing of the Presidency College for some years it was transferred to Shibpur in 1880. In 1858, Engineering Colleges were set up at Poona and Madras and affiliated respectively to the Bombay and Madras Universities. For long, law classes used to be attached to the Arts and Science Colleges.

Later, separate Law Colleges were set up.

Sir Syed Ahmad : The sphere of activity of Sir Syed Ahmad was the North-Western Province (present Uttar Pradesh). In early life, he was a civil servant. During the Sepoy Mutiny, he was on the side of the British.

British rule and
Muslims

It was his firm conviction that participation in the revolt had gone against the Muslim community because it had alienated the British Government. He tried to convince the Muslims that British rule would prove beneficial for them. Through years of persistent efforts he transformed the Muslims into a community loyal to the alien rulers.

The Wahabis regarded British rule as infidel rule and hence considered that it would be improper for Muslims who were true to their religion to live under such alien rulers. Sir Syed Ahmad opposed this point of view. He pointed out that the British rulers observed impartiality about religion and did not interfere with the religious sentiments and observances of the Muslims. As such,

Wahabi Move-
ment

British rule could not be objectionable for the Muslims. This argument was not acceptable to the Wahabis. The Wahabi movement remained a powerful one for some years after the Sepoy Mutiny. Later, it became weakened and lost much of its influence among the Muslims. Then Sir Syed Ahmad's anti-Wahabi views found favour with the Muslims and the idea that British rule was opposed to Islam gradually evaporated.

The Sepoy Mutiny and the Wahabi movement made the British rulers take a very uncharitable view of the Muslim community. Anti-British sentiments of the Muslims should be dealt with severely: this was in general the feeling that strongly coloured the opinions of the rulers. As a result, many Muslims were penalised on charges of disloyalty and the holdings of many in land etc. were forfeited. Sir Syed Ahmad tried to impress on the British that the Muslims were not disloyal, that they had accepted British rule. He worked to establish a bridge between the rulers and his community. Gradually, there was a reversal of outlook among the rulers.

In 1871, the famous book by Sir William Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, came out. He admitted that there existed discontent among the Muslims due to a variety of reasons.

Hunter's book The introduction of the Permanent Settlement had led to a curtailment of their traditional rights in landed properties. Spurning of English education had closed the door of Government service for them. Hunter wrote that while 170 years ago it would almost have been impossible for a Muslim of the elite class to become poor, it was now next to impossible for such a Muslim to remain rich. In order to do away with such a state of affairs, Hunter pleaded for larger scope for the Muslims in Government service.

Government service was closely linked with English education. Government work was conducted in English; thus there was no scope for service under the Government without knowledge of English. Again, promotion in Government service depended on college education and University degrees. But the Muslim community had, as early as the opening phase of the nineteenth century, decided to spurn English education. Though a few Muslims had opted for higher education both in this country and in England, the community as a whole did not change its attitude even by the end of the nineteenth century. Islamic tradition presupposed very close links between educa-

English education tion and religion; education in isolation from
and Muslims religion was not acceptable to the Muslims.

But English education had no such connection with religion. Secondly, the Arabic and Persian languages occupied a very insignificant position in University education. Thus, education in schools and colleges did not provide much scope to Muslims for intimate acquaintance with Islamic culture. The Hindus, though ardently embracing English education, maintained links with their religion and traditional culture. A review of the lives of Ram Mohan Roy and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee would show that English education could forge new bonds between cultures, old and new. The Muslim community did not strive for forging any such bond; rather it kept its eyes fixed on

the old and dismissed the new. Naturally, therefore, the Muslims lost the opportunities and advantages of the new epoch.

Sir Syed Ahmad alerted the Muslims about the perils of this short-sighted attitude. In 1872, he stated that the old books of the Muslims did not teach them freedom of thought; rather they compelled men to live in slavery and to hate their fellow men, and encouraged interest in imaginary tales. Such devastating criticism of the old educational system, to which the Muslims had clung with such touching loyalty, affected his popularity temporarily. However, he was determined to make the Muslim community face the reality of the modern epoch.

Sir Syed Ahmad's
educational
policy

By establishing an English school at Ghazipur and setting up a Society for translating into Urdu some standard English books, Sir Syed Ahmad initiated his educational reforms. Thereafter he went to England and gained first-hand experience of the English educational system; it seemed to him that it would pay to establish a college for the Muslims in India on the models of Oxford and Cambridge. Several years later (1877) he founded the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College' at Aligarh. This College developed later into the present Aligarh Muslim University. Sir Syed Ahmad was the principal figure in the management of this college till his death (1898).

In the educational sphere, the Aligarh College aimed at establishing a bridge between the accumulated wisdom of the East and the literature and science of the West and in infusing into the dreamy Oriental mind the realistic enthusiasm of Western character. The College had also a basic political objective: to transform the Muslims into fit subjects of the Empress of India, to generate among them a feeling of loyalty based on appreciation of benefits of British rule. Aligarh became the main educational centre of the Muslims in North India. The ideals of the new education gradually permeated the Muslim community. In 1891-92, the Muslims constituted 19.2 per cent of the total number of students in India. Sir Syed Ahmad's educational policy ushered in a

Aligarh College

new age among the Muslims through the Aligarh College.

Politically, his fundamental principle was unquestioned loyalty to the British. It was his impression that the Muslims would have to step towards progress through removal of British suspicions about their loyalty and through dependence on Governmental benevolence.

Sir Syed Ahmad's political outlook Thus, not to speak of initiating any movement against the Government, he was not even prepared to bother them with appeals and petitions through the forum of meetings and gatherings. For this reason, he did not associate himself with any political organisation. Muslim leaders from Bengal like Abdul Latif and Syed Amir Ali were not able to enlist his active co-operation in organisational work. His policy underwent a change after the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Taking the Congress to be a political front of the Hindus, he urged the Muslims not to join it. When the Congress incurred the displeasure of a section of the civil servants, he actively opposed the Congress and set up two political organisations, one after another. In all these matters his friend, guide and philosopher was the British Principal of the Aligarh College, Theodore Beck.

In a speech at Lucknow (1887) two years after the birth of the Congress, Sir Syed Ahmad announced his political programme. He had three main arguments. First, India had 'two different nations', *i.e.*, the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations. The Congress, on its part, regarded the Hindus and the Muslims as forming a single nation; its aim was to lay the foundation of a single and compact Indian nationality. Opposing the Congress, Sir Syed Ahmad produced the two-nation theory. Long afterwards, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's demands on the basis of this theory led to the partition of India; Pakistan was thus born. Secondly, representative institutions would not be in consonance with the conditions in India; such institutions would inevitably be dominated by the Hindu majority and adversely affect Muslim interests. The Congress was trying for an extension of the political rights of the people through represen-

tative institutions. Sir Syed Ahmad converted the Muslims to a totally opposite point of view. Thirdly, for safeguarding their interests in the political and administrative spheres, the Muslims would have to depend entirely on the favours of the British.

There is no doubt that Sir Syed Ahmad deserves a very high place among the political leaders of the nineteenth century. Although he was a devout Muslim, his mind was free from the religious hangovers from a by-gone age; he did not hesitate to embrace the new in education and political ideas. During the last phase of his life, he was the undisputed leader of the Muslims. Even long after his death, his message continued to influence the Muslim community. It was a tragedy, however, that he judged the political problems of India exclusively from the standpoint of the immediate interests of the Muslims. Such a narrow outlook was not unnatural in those times, for the educationally backward Muslims could not hope to compete on equal terms with the Hindus in any sphere of life. But this weakness could not be an excuse for opposing the nationalism of the Congress in its totality. By isolating the Muslim community from the Hindus, Sir Syed Ahmad made inevitable the future travail of India.

Aligarh movement : Though the Aligarh College was essentially a centre of education, it had also a distinct political aim : to develop a spirit of loyalty to the British among the Muslims. Muslim youths educated in this college secured Government service quite easily and then impressed on their community the need for loyalty to British rule. When the Congress launched the movement for holding the Indian Civil Service Examination in India, Sir Syed Ahmad opposed it. He was afraid that if the examination were held in India, Hindus would enter the Service in greater numbers and the Muslims would stand no chance in the competition.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, the Aligarh College became the centre of Sir Syed Ahmad's own brand of political movement. This was due to two reasons. In the first place, Aligarh was the centre of his anti-Congress moves. Secondly, three British Principals—Theodore Beck, Theodore

Morrison and W. A. J. Archbold—of the Aligarh College gave up the political neutrality normally expected of teachers and openly joined the anti-Congress bandwagon. The instigation and direction of Beck and Morrison particularly influenced Sir Syed Ahmad's politics.

After the death of Sir Ahmad, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk took over charge of the Aligarh College. Under him, the Aligarh College retained its political character. In 1906, he was the leader of the Simla Deputation which placed the demand for Separate Electorates before Lord Minto.

Before the birth of the Congress, the principal political leaders of the Muslims were Abdul Latif and Syed Amir Ali; their centre of activities was Calcutta. After the founding of the Congress, Sir Syed Ahmad became the topmost leader and Muslim politics came to be centered round Aligarh. The political demand which saw its birth and development at Aligarh gradually spread over the whole of India in the twentieth century and made the way clear for the eventual partition of India.

Bengali literature : The flowering of Bengali literature in all its maturity in the second half of the nineteenth century is one of the landmarks in the history of world literature. Bengali prose, born at the beginning of the nineteenth century, reached a high stage at the century's close. No novels, short stories and dramas existed in the language in the first half of the century, but these two forms of literature made their fullfledged appearance in the second half. In poetry, the *payar* metre gave way to blank verse and lyric. New light was thrown on several branches of knowledge through well-written, scholarly essays. Periodicals rose to the level of literature. The Bengali genius, so long dammed, now burst forth into a torrent of creativity through the newly-enriched language of the soil.

Western contribution to this development is easily noticed. An erudite writer has stated that the history of Bengali literature Western influence in the nineteenth century is really the history of the influence of European thought over that of Bengal. This general remark is not wholly true :

though Bengali literature borrowed ideas, form and style from European literature and philosophy, it was never isolated from the mainstream of Bengali life. Eminent men of letters like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Hem Chandra Banerjee, Nabin Chandra Sen, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindra Nath Tagore were all well-versed in Western literature; but their contributions could never have achieved permanent literary excellence had they been rooted in imitation only. Michael imbibed Western influence the most, but even he turned to Sanskrit for his themes and vocabulary. Bankim was influenced by the philosophical views of John Stuart Mill in early life, and by those of Comte in his later years; but his novels are pure distillations of the pleasures and pains of Bengali life. Rabindranath was revelling in the message of the Upanishads even from his early years.

The literature of the Bengali had intimate links with his political consciousness. The poet, Rangalal Banerjee, in his *Padmini Upakhyan*, sang a paean to freedom in the inimitable lines which posed the question: Who would want to live without freedom and embrace the fetters of slavery? The pangs and humiliations of bondage made Michael Madhusudan burst into anguished lamentations in blank verse.

Nationalism flashes like lightning through the allegorical verse of Hem Chandra's *Britrasamhar*. Nabin Chandra, in his narrative poem *Palasir Yuddha*, paid his mournful tribute to the sunset of Bengali freedom on the field of Plassey. In Rabindranath's poems, songs, various essays and novels like *Gora*, nationalism glows with an ethereal charm. His poem *Shivaji* is a particularly fine example of such expression. The national anthem of free India (*Janaganamana-Adhinayaka*) comes from his pen.

Bankim Chandra was the high priest of nationalism in literature. He was one of the first graduates of the Calcutta University and a Deputy Magistrate under the Government in his avocation. The image of the motherland he worshipped has been depicted in his novel, *Anandamath*. The hymn to the

motherland, *Bande Mataram*, which is the most forceful expression of Indian nationalism, appears in this novel.

In literature, Iswar Chandra Gupta (1812-59), the editor of *Sambad Prabhakar*, acted as a connecting link between the old tradition and the new stir in the second half of the nineteenth century. In prose, Akshay Kumar Dutta, the editor of *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, enriched the Bengali language with historical and scientific contributions. He was well versed in Western Philosophy. Child marriage, polygamy, the sorrows and humiliations of widowhood—against all these social evils he preached with the deepest sensitivity. In prose, the first successful innovator was Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Deriving materials from Sanskrit and English literatures, he presented these in lucid and melodious prose. The prose styles of Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath had to a significant extent been influenced by that of Vidyasagar.

In poetry, Michael (1824-73), Rangalal (1827-87), Nabin Chandra (1837-1909) and Hem Chandra (1838-1903) broke away from the bonds of the old *payar* metre and introduced new forms. Michael initiated the blank verse form in Bengali. His *Meghanadbadh Kavya* was published in 1861. Rangalal's verse-tale, *Padmini Upakhyan*, is imbued with Bengal's newly-awakened sense of history and nationalism. In Nabin Chandra's trilogy (*Raibatak*, *Kurukhshetra* and *Pravas*) ancient lore has been treated creatively in the light of modern philosophy. His other narrative poem, *Palasir Yuddha*, electrified the society with its burning patriotic fervour. In Hem Chandra's *Britrasamhar*, the spirit of the new nationalism is quite unconcealed within the framework of a mythological tale. Though both Nabin Chandra and Hem Chandra experimented with blank verse following Michael, none of them was a conspicuous success.

The first full-fledged novel in Bengali, *Alaler Gharer Dulal*, was published in 1858. The author was Pyarichand Mitra, though he used the pen-name 'Teckchand Thakur'. In 1862 appeared *Hutom*

Panchar Naksa by Kaliprasanna Sinha. Both the authors used very simple language to pinpoint some social evils. Later, Bankim Chandra established a permanent place for the novel in Bengali literature. Western influence is particularly noticeable in the case of the novel. In earlier times, Bengali literature could not boast of any novel; this was a *genre* which came into vogue from European literature in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The precursors in the field of drama were Ramnarayan Bhattacharyya ('*Natuke Ramnarayan*'), Michael Madhusudan and Dinabandhu Mitra. Michael's *Krishnakumari Natak* (1861) was the first tragic drama in the Bengali language. Besides this, he also wrote two satirical dramas. Dinabandhu Mitra's play, *Nildarpan*, came out in 1860. The theme of this drama was the tragic plight of the Bengali peasants under the iron heel of the British indigo-planters, and not

Drama

any historical event or ancient lore. In composing satirical pieces also, Dinabandhu was a conspicuous success. Girish Chandra Ghosh wrote numerous plays. He was both a dramatist and an actor. The Bengali stage had close links with nationalism.

By his magnificent literary contributions, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94) has created for himself an immortal place in the Bengali mind. Though Bankim Chandra known primarily as a novelist, he made distinctive contributions to other types of prose-writing as well. Several of his novels (*Durgeshnandini*, *Rajsinha*, etc.) were historical. In *Anandamath*, history and nationalism come together. Among the social novels, *Bishabriksha* stands supreme. Most of the novels of Bankim Chandra achieve rare excellence so far as language, depiction of character and plot-construction are concerned. However, some critics are of the view that by converting the novel, even though partially, into a vehicle for moral preaching, Bankim Chandra had sometimes marred artistic values.

Bankim Chandra's philosophical views and humanism have found expression in his essays and two books, *Dharmatattwa* and *Krishnacharitra*. In *Kamalakanter Daptar*, he has presented

serious matter in a light vein. In literary criticism, he introduced a new style and a new ideal. As the composer of the song *Bande Mataram*, he has etched for himself an unforgettable place in the history of nationalism. *Bangadarshan*, a literary journal edited by Bankim Chandra, set a standard which is still to be surpassed.

Rabindra Nath was born in the Tagore family of Jorasanko in 1861. He was the son of 'Maharshi' Debendra Nath Tagore and grandson of Dwarakanath Tagore, the associate of Ram Mohan Roy. The germination of his poetic powers is first noticeable in the poem, *Nirjharer Swapnabhanga*, composed in 1882. His *Manasi*, *Sonar Tari* and *Chitra* were all published before the end of the nineteenth century. One of his best novels, *Chokher Bali*, was published in 1903. He was unceasing in his literary creation till his death in 1941. The miraculous flowering of Rabindra Nath's genius in such varied fields as lyrical poetry, drama, short story, novel and essay raised Bengali literature to the stature of world literature. It was as a recognition of this that he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, the highest literary award in the world, in 1913.

Rabindra Nath's towering personality should not be judged from the point of view of literature only. His genius was a combination of Eastern and Western philosophy; it was saturated with a noble humanism which was beyond all limitations of time and place. As a result, Rabindra Nath was accorded unheard-of reverence internationally as a universal genius. Secondly, though a poet and a philosopher too, Rabindra Nath did not set his face against reality. Santiniketan and Sriniketan offer ample evidence of his practical interest in education and rural improvement. Thirdly, he was one with his fellow-countrymen in suffering the pangs of political bondage. He had intimate links with the Swadeshi movement. He renounced the knighthood, received from the British Government, in protest against the Jallianwala-bagh massacre. Mahatma Gandhi regarded him as 'Gurudev'.

Even in his final days he vehemently opposed the repressive policy of the British.

Renaissance of Eastern Art: In the second half of the nineteenth century, in step with the spread of English education, Schools of Art were founded in several Indian cities. English artists were the Principals of such schools and under instructions from them students used to be taught the Western Art ideals and techniques of Western art. Emphasis was laid more on imitation than on natural development of creative capacity; naturally such art lacked any originality and offered no scope for natural development of artistic talents.

The English artist, E. B. Havell, was appointed Principal of the Madras School of Art in 1884. In 1896, he came to Bengal as Principal of the Calcutta School of Art. He was not in favour of mechanical imitation of Western art. After acquiring a profound knowledge of India's ancient art, he decided that the students of the Schools of Art should turn to the country's sadly-decaying but rich artistic heritage. This respect for the past and for tradition was in consonance with the new nationalism. Lord Curzon co-operated with Havell's refreshingly new outlook by initiating steps for preservation of antiquities. During the Sawdeshi movement against Curzon's Partition of Bengal, with its emphasis on discarding foreign goods in favour of indigenous products, its influence spread to the realm of art also. The artists freed themselves from the grip of Western ideals and styles and engaged themselves in searching for inspiration and example in the country's own past tradition.

Havell and Abanindra Nath Tagore established links between India's ancient artistic styles and the new Indian aspirations. Abanindra Nath was an associate of Havell in the Calcutta Art School. He was not only enthusiastic about India's own past artistic glory; the arts of ancient Iran and Japan also evoked his admiration. He evolved his own artistic style. It was a combination of Eastern and Western styles, but did not in any way impair the heritage

of ancient Indian art. His paintings are the finest examples of the artistic genius of modern India. Artists associated with Santiniketan like Gaganendra Nath Tagore and Nandalal Basu firmly established the influence of India's fruitful past in the sphere of painting. But in architecture, new India has not looked back to its own past and instead has opted for Western styles.

Press and public opinion : From the time of Ram Mohan Roy onwards, public opinion in respect of politics, society and religion used to find expression in periodicals edited by Indians.

Freedom of the Press In his time, the press was subjected to severe Government control ; as such, the editors could not freely voice the grievances of the people and criticise Government policies and activities. Ram Mohan vehemently protested against this. In 1836, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the acting Governor-General, revoked the law on newspaper control. During the Sepoy Mutiny, restrictions were re-imposed ; but these were withdrawn with the return of peace.

As the administration of Lord Lytton, the Governor-General, was regarded as anti-people in many respects, the papers began to criticise it severely. The barrage of criticism came primarily from the vernacular press. In order to gag it, Lord Lytton introduced the Vernacular Press Act in 1878.

Lytton's policy This Act provided for severe restrictions against the language papers, but not against those published in English. To escape the restrictive prohibitions, the Bengali language section of the bilingual *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was discontinued and the paper was transformed entirely into an English daily.

Lord Ripon repealed Lytton's Act and released the press from all fetters. Later, beginning from the Swadeshi movement and up to the thirties, various restrictive measures were adopted by Government to control the press.

During the Sepoy Mutiny and the 'Indigo Mutiny', the most influential paper in Bengal was the *Hindoo Patriot*. Its editor, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, was a progressive and

spirited journalist. After his death, the editorship devolved on Krishnadas Pal. During his tenure, the paper exercised considerable influence over the middle class and the official circles.

English
newspapers

The *Indian Mirror*, founded by Keshab Chandra Sen in 1861, was in favour of an advanced outlook in social and political affairs. The *Bengalee*, founded in 1862 and edited by Surendra Nath Banerjea from 1879 onwards, became the chief mouthpiece of the nationalist movement. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was published by Sisir Kumar Ghose in 1868 from the village of Amritabazar in Jessore district. He was for long closely associated with the nationalist movement. Two other influential English-language papers, *Reis and Rayyet* and *Indian Nation*, came out in the first half of the eighth decade of the nineteenth century.

There were many Bengali-language papers in the middle of the nineteenth century; their total circulation was nearly six lakhs. In 1860, the famous Christian missionary, James Long, in his evidence before the Indigo Commission, stated that these papers were 'genuine exponents of native opinion'. In

Bengali
newspapers

1858, the *Somprakash* was published on encouragement from Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The editor was Dwarakanth Vidyabhusan. This paper came out at first from Calcutta, and later from the village of Changripota in the district of 24-Parganas. It reached the acme among the Bengali newspapers. Later, the *Sulav Samachar*, the *Bangabasi* and the *Sanjibani* came out. The *Sulav Samachar* was the mouthpiece of the Indian Reform Association founded by Keshab Chandra Sen. No other paper surpassed the *Bangabasi* in popularity; its circulation rose up to twenty thousand. Krishna Kumar Mitra, the editor of the *Sanjibani*, was an influential leader during the Swadeshi movement.

In those times, journalism was regarded as a way of serving the nation. Not only Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Keshab Chandra Sen, but Bankim Chandra Chatterjee also was connected with journalism. *Bangadarshan*, edited by him, though

primarily a literary journal, also included essays on political, economic and social issues. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Krishnadas Pal, Sisir Kumar Ghose and Krishna Kumar Mitra have become memorable figures in the history of nationalism. The contribution of the newspapers to the gradual development of nationalism deserves particular mention.

Though the papers in those days betrayed a conservative attitude on some aspects of religion and society, these were, on the whole, on the side of progress. The papers were managed by the English-educated middle class and, as such, reflected mainly its own views and interests. However, the interests of the peasants and the workers were not totally ignored. Numerous complaints relating to the oppression of the poor by Government officials used to be aired in the papers. In two famous essays, *Bangalar Krishak* and *Samya*, Bankim Chandra discussed the oppression of the peasantry from the economic point of view.

Religion : In the second half of the nineteenth century, the two principal figures of the Brahmo Samaj were Debendra Nath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. Debendra Nath did not consider the Vedas infallible, but used to maintain links between the Brahmo faith and the ancient scriptures and traditions of the Hindus. He differed with Keshab Chandra Sen in this matter. Debendra Nath regarded the Brahmo sect as part of the Hindu society and observed the traditional Hindu caste system. On the other hand, Keshab Chandra regarded the Brahmo faith as a universal religion and was in favour of totally discarding the caste system. This difference resulted in the Brahmo Samaj, being divided into two. The section loyal to Debendra Nath became known as the 'Adi Brahmo Samaj'; Keshab Chandra formed the 'Bharatvarsiya Brahmo Samaj' with his followers (1866). Some years later, differences arose regarding the rites observed during the marriage ceremony of Keshab Chandra's daughter and a third branch of the Brahmo Samaj, led by Shibnath Shastri and Anandamohan

Basu, was formed (1878). It came to be known as the 'Sadharan Brahmo Samaj'. This new branch gradually extended its influence.

By their commitment to rational thinking in respect of religion and social practices, the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj attracted the whole of the Hindu society to the path of progress. They were particularly interested in the spread of education and social reforms. In the arena of politics, Keshab Chandra was whole-heartedly in favour of British rule. Other Brahmo leaders such as Rajnarayan Basu, Shibnath Shastri, Anandamohan Basu and Bipin Chandra Pal were intimately connected with the nationalist movement. In the sphere of religion, all sections of the Brahmos were monotheists.

The 'Prarthana Samaj' of Bombay followed the Brahmo Samaj in the matter of religion. It was founded in the sixties under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen. Among its leaders were Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar and Mahadev Govind Ranade. The Prarthana Samaj had limited influence in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

The methods followed by the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj to reform the ancient Hindu religion were not followed by Swami Dayanana Saraswati, the founder of the 'Arya Samaj'. He aimed at reviving the Vedic religion to replace the current Hindu religion. He was born in a Brahmin family of Gujarat in 1824 and was named Mula Shankar.

He was a Yogi and travelled for a long period in different provinces of India as an ascetic. He came into contact with the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. In 1875, he founded the first Arya Samaj in Bombay. He explained his creed in his book, *Satyartha Prakash*, written in Hindi. He died in 1883.

The Arya Samaj regards the Vedas as the basis of religion. On this point, the view of Ram Mohan and Dayananda were similar. But Ram Mohan considered the views of ancient commentators like Sayana as authoritative in their interpretation of the Vedas, whereas Dayananda accepted only his own interpretation. Dayananda had no knowledge of English. It was his be-

belief that importation of Western ideas and arguments was not necessary for the reform of religion and society in India, that the clue to progress could be found in the ancient scriptures themselves. The belief extended to the political sphere and gave impetus to nationalism.

Dayananda tried to remake the Hindu society by discarding such traditional features as worship of different types of divinities, the caste system and recognition of Brahminical superiority in society. He approved inter-caste marriage, disapproved child marriage and recognised the right of all castes to read the Vedas; however, he disapproved widow remarriage. It was part of the activities of the Arya Samaj to bring back to the fold of the Hindu society, through a process of purification, those Hindus who had earlier embraced Islam or Christianity.

The Arya Samaj took a leading part in disseminating Western education in north-western India. Through colleges and schools set up by the Arya Samaj, nationalism spread in the Punjab.

Three different methods were tried for the improvement of the Hindu religion in Bengal. Dogmatic exponents like Sasadhar Tarkachuramani and Krishna Prasanna Sen used to glorify the Hindu religion in Bengal traditional Hindu religion by upholding all the existing superstitions and prejudices. They were not ready to countenance any change in religion and society. Their influence was not acceptable to the educated, rational mind. Secondly, Bankim Chandra interpreted the ancient scriptures of the Hindus in the light of Western philosophy. His books, *Dharmatattwa* and *Krishnacharitra*, contain such interpretations. Similar attempts were made in the poetical works (*Kurukshetra*, *Raibatak* and *Pravas*) of Nabin Chandra Sen. The rational form of the Hindu religion which they presented appealed to the educated middle class of Bengal.

The third alternative was that offered by Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86). He did not acquire learning through formal education, Eastern or Western. He was not 'educated' in the sense in which Ram Mohan or Dayananda were 'educated'. But he gain-

ed real wisdom through deep meditation ; he was blessed with the spiritual power which enables man to meet eternal truth. Rising above all sectarian worship and rituals and practices, he declared that there were as many ways as there were views—that, given a real hankering for God, man can reach Him through any method of worship. Sri Ramakrishna's message was easily understandable and acceptable to all, both educated and uneducated. Not confining his reformist efforts within any particular framework, he instilled a new spirituality into the Hindu society.

Ramakrishnan

A good many among the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna attained to a higher level of spiritual life. The greatest among them was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). He had a brilliant University career and was proficient in the English language and Western philosophy. His rational bent of mind underwent a total change when he came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. He subscribed wholly to the ideals of his *Guru* and was spiritually regenerated.

Vivekananda

After the demise of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda travelled in the north, the west and the south of India as a monk. In 1893, he joined the 'Parliament of Religions' at Chicago in America and delivered speeches proving the superiority of the Hindu religion. He made similar speeches in other cities of America and different places in Europe at different times. This established his international reputation and removed some of the prejudices about the Hindu religion in the Western world.

Vivekananda was a many-sided genius. He was not only a preacher, but also a devotee of the highest order. But devotion to religion did not make him indifferent to the material world. He loved his country and its people. Though not connected in any way with politics, his message was a major source of nationalism. The superstitions of the society and the poverty of the people pained him greatly. Humanism was one of the principal features of his character. His books have greatly enriched Bengali literature. Worship of God, knowledge of philosophy, nationalism, social work, cultivation of literature—in all

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these varied spheres he proved himself an extraordinary genius within too brief a life-span. His towering figure dominates the history of nineteenth-century India.

Militant nationalism : Towards the end of the nineteenth century, several secret societies were formed in Bengal and Maharashtra with political aims. Systematic formation of secret societies and revolutionary activities began in Bengal in connection with the Swadeshi movement. Though the movement for 'boycott' of foreign goods gathered considerable strength, the Government remained adamant about the Partition of Bengal. Open resort to arms against the British was hardly possible. Thus the educated youth of Bengal came round to the view that secret violence was the real answer in such a situation. Their aim was not confined to undoing the Partition of Bengal; there was a broadening of the objective till finally it was nothing less than independence of India. This new form of nationalism was based on armed activities. To the Indian historians, this is militant nationalism; to the British rulers, terrorism.

Militant nationalism derived its moral impetus from Hindu religion and philosophy. The firm belief in the immortality of the soul made the revolutionaries indifferent about physical pain and death. They used to derive inspiration from the *Gita* and the writings of Vivekananda. Bankim Chandra's *Anandamath* instilled in them the ascetic's spirit of renunciation and made the image of the Divine Mother reflect that of the motherland. Sri Aurobindo's *Bhabani Mandir* introduced the ideal of the worship of *Sakti* (the Mother Goddess representing Strength). The memory of Shivaji's struggle for freedom spread its inspiration from Maharashtra to Bengal. Rabindranath composed a wonderful poem on the theme of Shivaji's vision of a Kingdom of true faith. Numerous inspiring songs and poems were composed on the Swadeshi movement. Kissing the hangman's rope with a smiling face, Bengal's brave sons like Khudiram set a glorious example of death defying patriotism.

CHAPTER IX

BRITISH POLICY OF DIVIDE AND RULE

Partition of Bengal (1905) : In 1854, the 'Lower Provinces' (*i.e.*, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam) of the 'Presidency of Fort William in Bengal' were placed under a Lieutenant-Governor. Formerly, these provinces were under the direct charge of the Governor-General in Council. In 1866, there was a terrible famine in Orissa. At that time no proper relief could be rendered to the distressed owing to various drawbacks of the administrative machinery. A Commission set up by the Government of India recommended some changes and improvements in the administrative system of Bengal. Detailed consideration of the issues at the levels of the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India revealed that it was not possible for a single Lieutenant-Governor to properly administer four large territories. Though the population of the Bengal Presidency was much larger than that of each of the other two Presidencies (Madras and Bombay), those two Presidencies had each a Governor and a Council while there was no Council to assist the Lieutenant-Governor in Bengal. It was, therefore, considered necessary to cut down the

Assam

Bengal Presidency both in size and population so as to afford some relief to the Lieutenant-Governor through reduction of his responsibilities. In 1874, Assam was separated from the Bengal Presidency and made a separate province under a Chief Commissioner. The Bengali-speaking districts of Sylhet and Cachar and the partly Bengali-speaking district of Goalpara were made parts of Assam. This was the first step in the partition of Bengal.

The separation of Assam, however, did not satisfactorily solve the administrative problems of the Bengal Presidency. The population of Bengal still continued to be larger than that of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Moreover, the separate administration of Assam created some problems. A question

arose as to whether the Lushai hills, brought firmly under the grip of the British, would remain under the Bengal Presidency or be part of Assam. Geographically, the region lay on the borders of Bengal and Assam. Secondly, highly placed Government officials in Assam used to be selected from members of the Indian Civil Service appointed for Bengal; there were some difficulties which did not permit appointment of members of the Indian Civil Service separately for Assam. These difficulties would not have arisen had Assam been a larger province. Thirdly, in the last years of the nineteenth century, the 'Assam-Bengal Railway' was built to improve the transport system of Assam and the Chittagong Division (consisting of the districts of Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali, Tipperah) of the Bengal Presidency. The Head Office of the Railway was located at Chittagong town. Assam's export goods (such as tea) transported by this Railway began to arrive at Chittagong port. As a result, Assam's links with the Chittagong Division became closer; economic interests were now added to geographical contiguity.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the question of separating, first, the Chittagong district and later, the whole of the Chittagong Division from the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal with a view to their inclusion in Assam was engaging the attention of the Government circles. The objectives was two-fold: to lessen the burden of the Lieutenant-Governor by reducing the Bengal Presidency both in size and population, and to correspondingly increase Assam's size and population for the increase of its resources and the improvement of its administrative system. Before any final decision could be taken, Lord Curzon took over as Governor-General (January-1899).

In 1901, Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Central Provinces, proposed that Orissa should be separated from the Bengal Presidency and merged with the Central Provinces. Sometime later, Curzon made Fraser the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Fraser was Curzon's chief lieutenant in the matter of

the partition of Bengal. After taking over the administration of Bengal, he submitted a detailed scheme for the partition of Bengal to the Government of India. The scheme was on the whole approved by Curzon.

Fraser-Curzon
Scheme

The Government of India published their proposal in December 1903. The proposal had basically two aspects : (1) The entire Oriya-speaking region (parts of which were in the Madras Presidency and the Central Provinces) was to be joined to Bengal. (2) Four districts of the Chittagong Division and two districts (Dacca and Mymensingh) of the Dacca Division were to be separated from Bengal and joined to Assam.

Immediately on publication of the proposal, Bengal broke out in a storm of protest. The political leaders and the newspapers all in one voice opposed the partition of Bengal. Their views were supported and echoed in numerous public meetings. The annual sessions of the Congress in 1903 and 1904 opposed the partition of Bengal.

That the administration of Bengal (area 189,000 sq. miles, population 78,493,000) was too much a burden for a single Lieutenant-Governor was only too true. But the burden could have been lessened in other ways. For example, a Council could have been set up (as was later done in 1901) to assist the Lieutenant-Governor ; or Bengal could have been placed (as was later done in 1912) under a Governor and a Council as were Madras and Bombay ; or, without separating the Bengali-speaking regions the Hindi-speaking and the Oriya-speaking regions could have been detached from Bengal (as was later done in 1912). It cannot, therefore, be conceded that for betterment of the administration there was no alternative to separation of West Bengal from East Bengal.

In reality, Curzon's policy was politically motivated. Instead of joining Marathi-speaking Berar with the Marathi-speaking region of the Bombay Presidency, he had made it part of the Hindi-speaking Central Provinces. In Maharashtra, political consciousness was quite sharp ; under Bal Gangadhar Tilak's leadership, it had become the hotbed of militant nationalism. It

was, therefore, necessary in the interests of British imperialism to divide the Marathi-speaking people and thus make them weaker. Curzon followed the same policy of 'Divide and Rule' while partitioning Bengal. The Hindus of Bengal had assumed leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. To reduce their strength it had become imperative to destroy their unity. Calcutta was the nerve-centre of Bengal's education, culture and politics. Curzon had well understood that if East Bengal was separated from Calcutta, the Hindus of East Bengal would be weakened and Calcutta's influence eroded. He wrote to the Secretary of State for India in February 1904, that the Bengalis considered themselves a nation and had dreams of driving out the British and installing a Bengali 'Baboo' at the 'Government House, Calcutta'.

Another purpose of the partition was to create animosity between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. Curzon knew that if this objective came to fruition, both the communities would be weakened and lose the strength to oppose British imperialism unitedly. Early in 1904, he delivered speeches at Dacca and Mymensingh in support of partition. He stated that Dacca, an old city associated with the history of the Muslim rule of bygone days, would again be the capital of a Muslim-majority province. Salimullah, the Nawab of Dacca, became Curzon's favourite by his backing for the partition and was granted a huge Government loan at a nominal interest.

Totally ignoring public opinion, Curzon finalised the measures for partition. The scheme of 1903 was extended; a new province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' was formed, joining the whole of the Chittagong and the Dacca Divisions and a major part of north Bengal to Assam. A Lieutenant-Governor was given the charge of its administration, with its capital at Dacca.

Two provinces The Muslims formed a large majority of the population of this province; and following the policy of 'Divide and Rule' the British rulers began to show special favour to them in all matters. Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the Lieutenant-Governor, said that the Muslims were the Govern-

ment's favourites, with the Hindus coming a poor second. The Hindu-majority districts of western Bengal remained joined to Bihar and Orissa. This province was named 'Bengal' with its capital at Calcutta. It was placed under a Lieutenant-Governor. The partition of Bengal became effective in October 1905.

The Swadeshi movement: With the announcement of the final decision of the Government of India regarding the partition of Bengal in July 1905, the Swadeshi movement began. On 13 July, the weekly *Sanjibani* placed the proposal for 'boycott' of British goods before the people. Numerous meetings in the rural areas endorsed the 'boycott' move. On 7 August, in a massive gathering at the Town Hall in Calcutta, it was declared that all British goods would be 'boycotted' till the partition of Bengal was repealed. The 'boycott' movement spread over the whole of Bengal.

On the day of the partition (16 October), the unity of the Bengalis was symbolised through the ceremony of tying a piece of thread round the wrist (*Rakhi-Bandhan*). Under the presidency of Ananda Mohan Basu, the foundation stone of a community centre, the 'Federation Hall', was laid at Circular Road, Calcutta. It was declared at the ceremony that the Bengali people would, with all their strength, try to minimise the evils of partition and maintain unity. The declaration in English was translated into Bengali by Rabindranath.

The 'boycott' movement had two objectives. In the first place, if British manufactures, particularly British fabrics, found no market here, that would adversely affect the interests of British manufacturing concerns, put pressure on British public opinion, and pave the way for repeal of the partition of Bengal. Secondly, if import of British manufactures was stopped, this would encourage the sale of Indian goods and contribute to greater productivity in the country. That would make India better off economically and its prospects of self-sufficiency a distinct possibility. The unrestricted import of British goods, if continued, would make it impossible for the infant industries of

India to compete on equal terms with the far more advanced industries of England. The first objective was political, the second economic; but both were closely inter-linked. A weapon like 'boycott' was not devised merely to cope with a temporary phenomenon (*i.e.*, the partition of Bengal); it was basically aimed at putting the Indian economy on a sound footing of self-sufficiency.

As a result of the 'boycott', the import of British manufactures, particularly British fabrics, was greatly reduced in the first two or three years. Though this hurt the British merchants economically, the crisis in trade did not make the British Government attach sufficient importance politically to the question of the partition of Bengal. The intensity of the 'boycott' movement abated after several years. The greater question of reforms

in administration, leading to the Morley-Minto Reforms, became the focal point of political interests. However, the 'boycott' movement had signalled the continued improvement of indigenous industry. The gradually increasing demand for Indian fabrics profitted the textile mills of western India. The handloom industry was expanded. A variety of goods other than fabrics began to be manufactured in small factories. Dependence on foreign goods began to be reduced; the Indian economy struck out a new path.

The essence of the Swadeshi movement was self-reliance. The eagerness for self-reliance did not remain confined to the economic sphere only, but spread to education also. Control of educational policy and interference in the working of educational institutions were parts of the Government's repressive policy. The need was, therefore, felt for Swadeshi educational institutions outside Government control. In November 1805, the

'National Council of Education' was founded. Several rich persons like Subodh Chandra Mallik and Brajendra Kishore Roychowdhury, a zamindar of Mymensingh, contributed gene-

rously. National schools were set up at different places. Hirendra Nath Datta declared that the Swadeshi movement had three aspects—political, economic and educational.

The present Jadavpur University is the final form of the central school set up by the National Council of Education.

Terrorism : Terrorism signifies armed struggle for independence. It is really another name for militant nationalism. The partition of Bengal was opposed not only peacefully through meetings and newspapers. The Bengali youth had been attracted by the ideal of revolutionary violence, which had appeared both inside India as well as outside it in different forms.

The first revolutionary organisation in Bengal was the 'Anusilan Samiti'. It had its branches in different places all over Bengal. Another group of revolutionaries were led by Barindra Kumar Ghose, the younger brother of Sri Aurobindo. They preached revolutionary ideas through the newspaper, *Jugantar*. Kshudiram Basu and Prafulla Chaki were associated with this group. After Kshudiram's execution (1908), 34 revolutionaries, including Sri Aurobindo and Barindra, were arrested in Calcutta. Tried in the Alipore conspiracy case, Sri Aurobindo was released while 16 others, including Barindra, were sentenced. This attempt to win freedom through the use of bombs created a stir all over India. Anyway, after the Alipore conspiracy case had rendered the group *Jugantar*—the group led by Barindra—leaderless, the Anusilan Samiti took over the task of fulfilling their unfinished mission. According to Government statistics, between 1907 and 1917 revolutionaries killed 64 people and committed 112 dacoities. Government officials and police informers were the targets of killing, while the dacoities served to collect necessary funds for the revolutionary activities.

Outside Bengal, revolutionary groups were formed in the Punjab and Maharashtra. The most prominent leader in the Punjab was Lala Hardayal. For political reasons, the leader of Maharashtra, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, used to reside in London, but his followers carried on revolutionary work

according to his policy in the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces.

Even before the First World War, Indian revolutionaries had become active in Europe for the freedom of their motherland. Shyamji Krishnavarma centred his activities in London.

Indian revolutionaries in Europe

Assisted by him, Madam Bhikhaji Rustam K.R. Cama propagated Indian revolutionary messages in Europe. She was known as the 'Mother of the Indian Revolution'. Savarkar, Lala Hardayal and Madan Lal Dhingra were associated with this programme.

When the First World War began, Indian revolutionaries concluded that England's danger was Indian's opportunity. It was the opportune moment to strike for Indian's freedom, and Germany, England's enemy, was approached for help. With the patronage of the German Government, the 'German Union of Friendly India' was set up in Berlin. Among its leaders were Lala Hardayal and Birendra Nath Chatterjee. This organisation used to send money to India to help revolutionary activities and arrange despatch of German arms for use by the revolutionaries. It had connections with the Indian revolutionaries in America.

In the United States, the organisation of the Indian revolutionaries was known as the 'Ghadar Party'. 'Ghadar' means revolt. The party's mouthpiece was a weekly called 'Ghadar'. It used to be brought out in the Urdu, Marathi and Punjabi languages. The party had branches in different American cities. Its objective

Indian revolutionaries in America

was to free India through violent revolution. One of its prominent leaders, Hardayal, had to leave America due to the adverse attitude of the United States Government. Then his unfinished work was taken over by Ramchandra. Later, a Bengali named Chandra Chakrabarty was sent to America to supervise the Ghadar party's work in respect of despatch of arms to India. When America joined the First World War (1917) as an ally of the British, the leading members of the Ghadar party were arrested.

The policy and activities of the Berlin Committee and the Ghadar party had greatly influenced the revolutionaries of Benpal. Hoping to be supplied with arms from outside, they prepared for open uprising. The principal leaders were Jatindra Nath Mukherjee and Jadugopal Mukherjee. It was arranged that the ships carrying arms sent from Germany would deliver these to the revolutionaries in the Sunderbans in Bengal and in the Orissa coast. However, the attempt proved abortive due to preventive steps taken by the Government. On the banks of the river Buri Balam near Balasore in Orissa, Jatindra Nath Mukherjee fought it out openly with the police and sacrificed his life. The memory of this incident has found an unforgettable place in the revolutionary annals of Bengal.

The British Government had adopted stringent measures to suppress the Swadeshi movement and terrorism. In 1917 Lord Chelmsford, the Governor-General, set up a committee to probe into the origin and methods of terrorism. The President of the Committee was Rowlatt, a Judge of the High Court in England. Among the members, two were Englishmen and two Indians. The Committee was officially known as the 'Sedition Committee'. The Committee's Report was published in 1918. This includes a detailed history of the Indian revolutionary movement. The Committee proposed new enactments for suppressing terrorism. The Act, which was passed in 1919 on the basis of this proposal, is unofficially known as the 'Rowlatt Act'. The Act put drastic curbs on the freedom of the individual for speedy punishment of terrorists.

Muslim League : The two-nation theory preached by Sir Syed Ahmad through the Aligarh movement had created division between the Hindus and the Muslims. To separate the two communities in Bengal was one of the major aims of Curzon's partition of Bengal. By showing special favour in respect of appointments to Government service and in other minor matters to the Muslim majority in the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, they were made more loyal to British rule. Encouraged

by Government patronage, Nawab Salimulla of Dacca laid the foundation of an organisation for the Muslims a year after the partition of Bengal. On his invitation, there was a gathering of Muslim leaders from different provinces at Dacca in December 1906. This meeting founded the 'All-India Muslim League'.

The Muslim League had three objectives: (1) To strengthen the 'feelings of loyalty' of Muslims towards the British and to put a stop to any mistaken notions among them about any Government measure; (2) 'to protect and advance' the political rights of the Muslims and to approach the Government with appeals and petitions about their 'needs and aspirations'; (3) to prevent any disharmony between Muslims and others, 'without prejudice to the other aforesaid objects'. The Secretary of the League declared that there might be 'social amity' between the Muslims and the Hindus, but no political unity; what the Hindus wanted—setting up of representative institutions, appointments to Government service through competitive examination, etc.—was supposed to go against the interests of the Muslims.

The League wanted to improve the condition of the Muslims with the patronage of the British; it was not interested in emulating the Congress by taking to the path of struggle with a view to gaining greater political rights for all Indians irrespective of creed or community. Though the League was born in Dacca, it was really based on the ideals and objectives of the Aligarh movement. At first Aligarh, and then Lucknow, was the principal centre of the League. Though the Nawab of Dacca had founded the Muslim League, the Muslims of Bengal could never gain admittance to the top echelons of the party's central leadership.

Separate Electorates: Mainly two events favoured the setting up of the Muslim League. In the first place, the partition of Bengal had led to political rivalry between the Hindus and the Muslims in Bengal. This could happen largely because of instigation from the British, both direct and indirect. Secondly, only three months before the Muslim League was founded, a deputation of the Muslims led by Aga Khan extracted

a promise from the Governor-General, Lord Minto, regarding the introduction of Separate Electorates (October 1906).

Sir Syed Ahmad regarded the Hindus and the Muslims as two separate nations. Though he did not voice this theory in a naked form, there is no doubt that towards the end of his life it governed his political programmes. After his death, this theory was made the basic plank of the Aligarh movement. The Aligarh leaders did not consider it reasonable for two separate nations to elect their representatives through a joint electorate. In the first place, the interests of the two nations were mutually exclusive and sometimes even antagonistic; as such, their representatives should be elected separately. Secondly, as the Hindus far outnumbered the Muslims, a joint electorate would, with the majority of votes resting with the Hindus, elect only Hindu representatives and give no fair chance to the Muslims to be elected in sufficient numbers.

Effects of two-nation theory

Based on this reasoning, the Muslim deputationists placed two major demands before Lord Minto. In the first place, there should be Separate Electorates, *i.e.*, the Hindu community would elect Hindus and the Muslim community Muslims as their representatives. Secondly, the Muslims should be given proportionately more seats than their numbers justified. Lord Minto agreed to both demands. This policy was applied to the Legislative Councils formed in 1909 on the basis of the Morley-Minto Reforms. This was subjected to severe criticism in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918); but as the Muslims were not in a mood to give up their special privileges, the system of Separate Electorates was kept alive in the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. In this way, the two-nation theory was given official recognition in the constitutional set-up of India. The inevitable result was the partition of India (1947).

Minto's policy

Lord Minto's policy was motivated by deep political calculations. In order to break the back of the movement against the partition of Bengal, it was imperative to weaken the Hindus. In 1905, the Congress President, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, deman-

ded for India colonial self-government, *i.e.*, the type of self-Government enjoyed by the British Colonies such as Canada and Australia. It was, therefore, also necessary to clip the wings of the Congress by making it politically feeble. To make this policy successful, the British showed special favours to the Muslims with a view to orienting them to an anti-Hindu and anti-Congress stance. It was discreet signalling from the Government which prompted the Muslim deputation to Lord Minto. With the co-operation of official circles, the British Principal of the Aligarh College, Archbold, arranged this fateful meeting. The petition which the deputationists submitted to Lord Minto also came from the pen of Archbold. For these reasons, Maulana Mahammad Ali described this meeting as a 'command performance'.

CHAPTER X

TOWARDS FREEDOM

Congress and Mahatma Gandhi: The political career of Mohanchand Karamchand Gandhi began in South Africa. While practising there as a lawyer he involved himself in struggle against the white rulers in defence of the human rights of the Indian community. Violence had no place in this struggle; its chief weapon was *satyagraha*, *i.e.*, non-violent resistance. In 1914, the South African Government made a compromise-settlement with Mahatma Gandhi.

Early in 1915, Gandhi came to India from South Africa. At first at Champaran in Bihar and then in the Kaira district of Gujarat, he launched *satyagraha* in defence of the interests of the peasantry. As in South Africa, in those two places also *satyagraha* paid dividends.

During the First World War, Gandhi supported England and actively co-operated with the Government in recruiting

soldiers. But in protest against the Rowlatt Act, he prepared to offer satyagraha (1919). This led to disturbances at different places in Gujarat and at Jallianwalabagh (Amritsar) in the Punjab. Pained by the manifestations of violence, Gandhi suspended his *satyagraha*.

Non-violent non-co-operation Movement : The policy of the Government had two aspects : suppression and concession. The Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwalabagh massacre represented the first. Simultaneously, concessions were dangled before the Indians in the form of constitutional reforms : Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1919, on the basis of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The Congress was divided on the question whether the meagre extension of the political rights of the Indians as envisaged in this Act was acceptable. Moderates like Surendra Nath Banerjea were in favour of giving the new constitutional system a trial, but other leaders differed. After some debates, the Moderates left the Congress. The Congress was at first, on the whole, inclined to take a favourable view of the Act. But the Congress session of 1920 accepted Gandhi's proposal for launching a non-violent non-co-operation movement. This marked the beginning of the Gandhian Era in the Congress. Rabindra Nath hailed him as 'Mahatma'.

The above-mentioned proposal brought two charges against the British. In the first place, on the question of Khilafat the sentiments of Indian Muslims had been ignored, the promise given to them broken and 'religious calamity' imposed on them. Secondly, in the Jallianwalabagh incident, the innocent had not been spared, the guilty Government officials had not been punished, and during discussions in Parliament, instead of showing any sympathy for the helpless Indian victims, the draconian measures adopted by the Government had been upheld. It was also asserted that in the absence of self-government, such terrible incidents were only too likely to be repeated in future. As such, so long as these two grievances were not redressed and self-government established, the Indian people had no option but to join the non-

Gandhi's
proposal

violent non-co-operation movement under the leadership of Gandhi.

The proposal contained detailed guidelines for conducting the movement : (1) Government titles, honorary posts and seats of nominated members in local self-governing institutions were to be renounced. (2) Durbars and ceremonies held by Government officials were to be boycotted. (3) Students were to be withdrawn from Government and Government-aided schools and colleges, with substitute arrangements for their education in national educational institutions. (4) Law courts were to be boycotted and all disputes settled through non-official mediation. (5) Nobody was to seek election to any Legislative Council formed under the Government of India Act, and if any one ignored this call from the Congress and sought election, the voters were to refuse to vote for him. (6) Foreign goods were to be boycotted, national products used and the hand-weaving process improved for the supply of indigenous fabrics.

With this programme, the non-violent non-co-operation movement was conducted in 1921 under Gandhi's leadership.

Results of Non-co-operation Movement

Boycott of Government schools and colleges was somewhat successful ; many students left such institutions and devoted themselves to the service of their motherland. The move to boycott the courts failed, though many eminent legal practitioners like Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru gave up their practice and began to serve the Congress. The call for boycott of the Legislative Councils was a total flop ; as people associated with the Congress did not stand for the elections, all the seats went to the anti-Congress elements. In constructive work, the Congress was on the whole successful. The use of the *Charka* became wide-spread ; many gave up use of foreign fabrics and took to the homespun *Khaddar*. Drinking became less prevalent. Society showed some interest in weeding out untouchability. The message of Hindu-Muslim unity was in the air.

In 1921, when the Prince of Wales came to India, peaceful *hartal* was observed all over India at the call of the Congress.

The Governor-General, Lord Reading, then let loose the police to suppress the movement launched by the Congress. But the Government did not gain anything by strong-arm tactics ; suppression rather encouraged Congressmen and stimulated the nationalist sentiment.

In the annual session of the Congress in 1921, the Non-co-operation movement was given fresh support and the need was recognised for transforming it into a mass civil disobedience movement. In 1922, Gandhi began mass *satyagraha* at Bardoli in Gujarat. But an infuriated mob killed 22 policemen at the village of Chauri Choura in Uttar Pradesh.

Alarmed at the outbreak of violence in the mass movement, Gandhi called off the *satyagraha* at Bardoli. Government arrested

End of non-
co-operation
Movement

and put him behind prison bars for six years. Deprived of his leadership, the Non-co-operation movement gradually petered out. This movement, however, was by no means a failure. It made the people politically conscious ; they learned to suffer and give up their personal interests for the sake of freedom. The Congress, no longer confined to the educated community, was transformed into an organisation of the common people.

The Khilafat Movement : It has already been stated that the grievances of the Muslims regarding the Khilafat had been accepted as one of the main reasons for the Non-co-operation Movement.

The Sultan of Turkey used to be regarded as the religious head or 'Caliph' of all the Muslims of the world. His political authority was limited only to the Ottoman Empire, but in the sphere of religion his leadership had been recognised by the world of Islam. During the First World war, when Turkey sided with Germany against England, the Indian Muslims faced a difficult dilemma. As loyal subjects of England

First World War
and Khilafat

they were bound to support England against Turkey in the war. But from the religious angle, it was their duty to support the Caliph against England. It was hardly possible to reconcile these conflicting loyalties. The

British Government, in order to enlist the sympathy of the Indian Muslims, had promised to treat Turkey leniently after the war. In 1918, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of England, declared that those portions of the Turkish Empire which lay in Asia would not be seized. Wilson, the President of the United States of America, supported this declaration. But after the war was over, this promise was ignored and the Turkish territories in Asia were placed under British and French authority. In the rest of the Turkish territories also, the Caliph was deprived of all power and subjected to the control of the victorians Allied Powers in all matters. The Caliph's loss of empire and prestige created great resentment among the Muslims in India.

In 1919-20, the Indian Muslims started a powerful movement in favour of the Caliph. This is known as the 'Khilafat movement'. Gandhi backed it. He considered the Muslim demands reasonable and did not like that the British Government should go back on their promise. When Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali assumed leadership of the Khilafat movement, Gandhi co-operated with them. But the British Government did not give any importance to the movement; the peace terms which were presented to the Sultan of Turkey in 1920 did not show any indication of softness. On advice from Gandhi, the Khilafat leaders accepted the policy of non-violent Non-co-operation.

After this, the Khilafat movement became one with the Non-co-operation movement of the Congress. Though the movement of the Congress virtually ceased after the arrest of Gandhi, the Khilafat movement continued; but the Hindu-Muslim unity which was being built up as a result of the struggle, as also Gandhi's influence on the Muslims, suffered a setback due to some sporadic incidents. In 1921, the 'Moplah' Muslims of Malabar rose against the British Government and committed atrocities on the Hindus in course of pillaging activities. In 1924, the progressive ruler of Turkey, Kemal Pasha, abolished

Gandhi and
Khilafat
Movement

Fate of the
Khilafat
Movement

the office of Caliph, ignoring the ancient Islamic tradition. There being no Caliph any more, the Khilafat movement lost all rationale. Maulana Muhammad Ali then turned against the Congress. He declared that it would be harmful for the Muslims to join Gandhi's movement.

Change in political situation : After the withdrawal of the non-violent Non-co-operation Movement, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru formed the Swarajya Party (1923). The strategy of boycotting the Legislative Councils which the Congress had adopted under the leadership of Gandhi was given up by the Swarajya Party. It planned to get into the Legislative Councils formed under the Government of India Act, 1919, and to oppose Government policy from within. The Swarajists did not leave the Congress, though they had basic differences with those who followed Gandhi and supported the Non-co-operation Movement. On the other hand, the followers of Gandhi, though they had withdrawn the Non-co-operation Movement, could not approve of the strategy of Council-entry. For some time the national struggle was fought on two fronts. Gandhi's followers pursued a constructive programme, *i.e.*, manufacture of Khadi, removal of untouchability, etc. As a result of the opposition of the Swarajya Party, ministers could not be permanently appointed in some provinces. This set at naught one of the major objectives of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Though the Swarajya Party was not able to paralyse the Government machinery, it was successful in clearly focusing the adverse reaction of the people about the Mont-Ford Reforms.

The Government of India Act, 1919, provided that after this Act had been in force for ten years, the British Government would appoint a Royal Commission which would examine whether it was necessary to amend or supplement the Act. In view of the fact that the political movement in India was gaining momentum, the Commission was set up even before the expiry of ten years (1927). A veteran lawyer and a former member of the Cabinet in England,

Swarajya Party

Simon
Commission

Sir John Simon, became its President. As no Indian member was included in the Commission, there was tremendous discontent in this country. When the Commission visited India to collect data, the Congress did not co-operate with it. However, the other political parties co-operated in its investigation. Its Report was published in 1930.

As recommended by the Commission, the British Government convened a Round Table Conference in London to discuss constitutional reforms in India (1930). The representatives of various political parties in England and India were invited to attend the Conference: the First Round Table Conference Indian Princes were also to be represented.

But the Congress did not join the Conference, and led by Gandhi, threw itself into the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-31).

Civil Disobedience Movement: The British Government released Gandhi in 1924 even before the completion of his prison term. Previously, the Congress aimed at 'colonial self-government' within the British Empire. Later, it set as its goal the attainment of *Swaraj* by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. In the third stage, the Congress target was 'complete independence'. To attain this objective, Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement in March, 1930.

The main item in his programme was violation of the Salt Act. By taxing salt and prohibiting its private production, the Government of India increased the price of an essential item of daily use; this made the plight of the poor miserable in the extreme. On the coast of Gujarat, at Dundee, Gandhi himself broke the Salt Act. Defiance of law took different forms in different provinces. In the North-West Frontier Province—the land of the brave and warlike Pathans the 'Red Shirt' volunteers broke the law under the leadership of Abdul Gaffar Khan, who became known as the 'Frontier Gandhi'. The Government of India resorted to repressive measures to break the movement in the different provinces of India.

In January 1931, the first session of the Round Table Conference in London came to an end. It has already been mentioned that the Congress had not joined it. But the British Government realised that without the co-operation of the Congress, no solution could be found to India's political problems. The Government of India accordingly released those prominent Congress leaders who had been put behind the bars in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi, after parleys with Lord Irwin, the Governor-General, entered into a pact (Gandhi-Irwin Pact) with him. By this pact, the Congress withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement and agreed to join the Round Table Conference for discussion of constitutional problems. Gandhi, as the sole representative of the Congress, took part in the second session of the Conference (1931). But he was unable to accede to the demands of the communalist Muslim leaders and their British patrons; so he returned to India empty-handed. The Civil Disobedience Movement was revived under his leadership (1932). The Governor-General, Lord Willingdon, let loose repression in a big way.

Gandhi-Irwin
Pact

Round Table
Conference

In August 1932, Ramsay McDonald, the Prime Minister of England, announced the 'Communal Award'. This Award specified the number of seats to be allotted to each community in the Legislative Councils under the new constitutional provisions. Separate Electorates were provided for the Europeans, the Muslims and the Sikhs; moreover, the Hindu community was divided into two units: Caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes. Realising that this politically-motivated division would weaken the Hindus, Gandhi protested against the Award and began a fast. Then the Communal Award was modified partially; Joint Electorate was provided for the Hindus as a whole, covering the Caste Hindu and the Scheduled Castes, the advanced and depressed sections, under certain conditions (September, 1932).

Poona Pact

By the middle of 1933, the mass Civil Disobedience

movement was withdrawn, but individual Civil Disobedience led by Gandhi continued. He was again placed under arrest and sentenced. However, as he resorted to fast again, he was freed because of risk to his health. He then moved away from the Civil Disobedience Movement and devoted himself to the uplift of the Harijans. The memory of the individual Civil Disobedience Movement gradually faded away.

Terrorism : After the Rowlatt Act had come into force, there was for sometime an ebb in the tide of terrorism in Bengal. With the withdrawal of the Non-co-operation Movement in 1922, the revolutionaries became active again. Apart from the established Anusilan and Jugantar groups, a new group emerged in Chittagong led by Surya Sen. This group organised the Chittagong Armoury Raid in 1930. After 1934, the revolutionary movement was again on the retreat. The repressive measures of Government made it difficult for the revolutionaries to operate. The politically conscious section of the people looked forward to constitutional reforms to be evolved in a peaceful manner.

Though Bengal was the hotbed of terrorism, it was quite active in some other provinces also. Among these, particular mention should be made of Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. In Uttar Pradesh, quite a number of centres of terrorism had cropped up due to the efforts of some Bengalis. A revolutionary organisation, 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, committed acts of terrorism in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, and the Punjab. Immortal revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh, Batukeswar Dutta, Jatin Das, Chandra Sekhar Azad and others were connected with this Association.

Peasants' and workers' movements : The freedom movement prior to the advent of Gandhi had two streams. The Congress believed in a policy of appeals and petitions, *i.e.*, the Congress leaders hoped for gradual attainment of self-government by touching the conscience of the British through such methods. They could not even think of any direct struggle against the Government. Extremist leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala

Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chandra Pal had lost their faith in such a policy, but could not change the nature of the movement conducted by the Congress. The Congress was primarily a mouth-piece of the educated middle class; it had some influence over the common people who, however, had no scope for participation in its working. Only in Bengal the Swadeshi Movement had directly linked the people with the Congress.

At the very beginning of the 20th century, the independence-movement found another channel: to reach its objective through violent, armed revolution. Those who chose this path had to maintain the utmost secrecy: they could not openly keep contact with the people or ask for their co-operation. Sometimes the common people used to help them surreptitiously, but there was no scope for openly propagating the ideas of revolution through violence among the people. Almost all such revolutionaries belonged to the middle class.

Gandhi brought the freedom movement from the middle class parlour and platform to the common people's humble cottages. In South Africa, he had fought for the oppressed commoners—the Indian 'coolies'. Return-
Congress and
peasantry
ing to his motherland, he similarly championed the interests of the common people. India being an agricultural country, the 'common people' were primarily peasants. In Bihar and Gujarat, Gandhi brought the peasants within the fold of the political turmoil, trained them to stand up to injustice bravely, and accustomed them to face official onslaughts peacefully. As a result, the Congress and the peasantry came into close contact with each other. When the Non-co-operation Movement was on, the peasants discarded British fabrics and British salt; police batons could not terrorize them into submission. Similarly, at the time of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the peasants, in spite of Government onslaught, produced salt and stopped paying land taxes. In this way, gradually the ground was prepared for peasant movements on a mass scale.

In 1934, a section among the Congress having faith in socialism formed the Congress Socialist Party. One of its prominent

leaders was Jayaprakash Narayan. The 'All-India Kishan Sabha' assumed the responsibility for organising the peasants in different parts of the country. In the early phase, one of the most prominent leaders of the Sabha was Swami Sahajananda Saraswati.

A few years after the Russian Revolution of 1917 the Communist Party of India was founded. One of the more prominent among the founders was M. N. Roy. Four parties of workers and peasants were associated with the Communist organisation; their activities embraced four provinces—Bombay Presidency, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab.

The Government of India Act, 1935: After Gandhi had returned empty-handed from the second session (1931) of the Round Table Conference in London, a third session was held in 1932. The Conference discussed constitutional problems in detail and from different angles. On the basis of these discussions, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, drafted a Bill which, after being passed by Parliament, became the Government of India Act, 1935. From the 1st of April, 1937, it came into force in the provincial sphere in toto and in the central sphere partially.

The new Act had two principal features: (1) provision for the formation of a Federation comprising the British Indian provinces and those Princely States which voluntarily joined it; (2) introduction of Provincial Autonomy. In regard to the States the decision to join the Federation or not rested exclusively with the Princes; their subjects were not allowed any say in the matter. The administration of the proposed Federation was vested in the Governor-General and a Cabinet. It was not made obligatory for the Governor-General to accept the advice of his ministers in all matters. He was vested with 'special responsibility' in several matters, such as threats to internal peace, etc. Again, he was given the right to exercise his 'individual judgment' in such matters as Defence, External Affairs, etc. To assist him in all these matters, provision was made for inducting three

'Counsellors' from outside the Cabinet. A two-chamber Federal Legislature, consisting of the 'Council of State' and the 'Federal Assembly', was provided for. The Princes of the States joining the Federation were given the right to nominate a fixed number of members for each of the two chambers; the people of these States were not given the right of electing their representatives. Provision was made for election of members from the British Indian provinces, though the Separate Electorates stayed.

The Congress subjected the Federation proposal to trenchant criticism on the following principal grounds: (1) the Governor-General had been vested with too much power. (2) The Princes of the States had been provided with opportunities for interfering in the affairs of British India. (3) No recognition had been given to the political rights of the people in the States. (4) The Act was silent about the basic political objective of India—the establishment of full Responsible Government.

Defects of
Act

The Muslim League criticised the Act mainly because it would establish a permanent Hindu majority in the Federal Legislature. The Princes feared that their powers would shrink in the event of their joining the Federation, and they would not any more be able to exercise unbridled tyranny in their own States. The Congress, the Muslim League and the Princes having all opposed the federal idea, each for its own reasons the Federation proposed in the Act of 1935 never materialised.

Provincial autonomy, which had its roots in the Act of 1919, reached its natural culmination in the Act of 1935. The Control which the Government of India exercised over the Provincial Governments had been relaxed to some extent by the Act of 1919, though the system still remained unitary. The Act of 1935 transformed it into a federal system; hence such control became still more relaxed. In a federal structure division of legislative powers is inevitable, *i.e.*, on some subjects legislative power is vested in the Central Legislature while in respect of some other subjects the Provincial Legislatures undertake legislation. The Act of

Provincial
autonomy

1935 contained three Lists. The right to legislate on the subjects included in the First List rested with the Central Legislature, in the Second List with the Provincial Legislatures, while in respect of the Third List both the Central and Provincial Legislatures had 'concurrent jurisdiction'. Any disputes between the Federation, the provinces or the States joining the Federation were to be settled by a newly-constituted central court, to be known as the 'Federal Court'. Any straying beyond the limits set down in the Lists by the Federal Legislature or any Provincial Legislature was to be set right by this Court. The right to hear appeals preferred against the different High Courts was also given to this Court. A Federal Court is an indispensable part of a federal structure. As the system prevailing in India so long was unitary, the need for such a court did not arise before.

The post of the Governor was modelled very much on that of the Governor-General. The Governor was to be assisted by a Cabinet, but was to have 'special responsibility' in certain matters and also to exercise 'individual judgment' in certain other matters. In six provinces, the Legislature was to be bicameral (Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly); in other provinces it was to remain uni-cameral (Legislative Assembly). The Separate Electorates system was kept intact. Burma was separated from India. The provinces of British India administered by Chief Commissioners instead of Governors were placed under the authority of the Federal Government and the Federal Legislature.

This provincial set-up was not acceptable to the Congress, but the Muslim League adopted a policy of utilising it as far as possible. The system came into force on the 1st of April, 1937, in the provinces administered by Governors. This remained effective till Independence (15 August, 1947). After that also, it was kept alive, though with certain important modifications, till the commencement of the Indian Constitution (26 January, 1950).

Increasing communalism : the idea of Pakistan : After the failure of the Khilafat movement, the possibility of establishing communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims gra-

dually receded and political rivalry between them increased. In 1928, leaders of different parties prepared a draft constitution for India (Nehru Report), but it was not acceptable to the Muslim leaders. Mohammad Ali Jinnah circulated a demand comprising 'Fourteen Points' to safeguard Muslim interests. In the Round Table Conference in London, communalist Muslim leaders were given particular importance. By their Communal Award, the British Government directly patronized communalism. The federal aspect of the Act of 1935 was not acceptable to Jinnah as it would have led to Hindu majority in the Central Government and the Central Legislature. But he accepted the provisions regarding the provinces in that Act, for in four provinces (Bengal, the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province) the Muslims were certain to constitute a majority in the Governments and the Legislatures.

Provincial Autonomy was introduced in April, 1937. Congress-led Ministries were formed in a majority of the provinces. In the four provinces already mentioned, non-Congress, Muslim majority cabinets were formed, but none of these were amenable to the influence of the Muslim League. Then Jinnah, as the Muslim League chief, began to incite the Muslims against the Congress Governments. Jinnah was a success politically in his aims ; in general the Muslims became averse to the Congress. In September 1939, the Congress Ministries resigned, for the Congress had withdrawn its policy of co-operation with the British when they dragged India into the Second World War without first obtaining the people's consent. Jinnah called upon the Muslims to observe a 'Day of Deliverance' to celebrate what he chose to describe as the end of Hindu rule.

The theory that the Hindus and the Muslims, though residing side by side in the same country for centuries, were yet two nations was gradually gaining ground from the time of Sir Syed Ahmad. It was preached in different ways by Maulana Mahammad Ali and Sir Mohammad Iqbal. After assuming the leadership of the Muslim League, Jinnah embraced and preached this theory. He

was of the opinion that it was only dreams that the Hindus and the Muslims could grow up to a single nation-hood. The political interests of the two nations were different and mutually opposed; these could not be reconciled within a single State structure. That was why a separate State was essential for the Muslims of India. In 1930, Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of the Punjab, proposed the formation of a self-governing State comprising the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. In 1933, a Punjabi student, Chaudhary Rahamat Ali, coined the word 'Pakistan' (land of the holy). Pakistan was to be an Islamic State; it was to include the Punjab ('P'), North-western frontier or the Afghanland ('A'), Kashmir ('K'), Sind ('S'), and Baluchistan. Later, Assam and Hyderabad were claimed as parts of Pakistan, though in none of these regions the Muslims were in a majority.

In March 1940, the 'Pakistan Resolution' was adopted at the Lahore session of the Muslim League. This Resolution stated that any new constitution of India, if it was to be acceptable to the Muslims, must ensure the formation of an independent State comprising those regions where the Muslims were in a majority, *i.e.*, in the north-western and eastern zones; the separate regions included in this State were to enjoy the rights of self-government and sovereignty. The Resolution did not clearly spell out the provinces which were to constitute Pakistan. In 1946, Jinnah demanded before the Cabinet Mission the bringing together of 'six Muslim provinces' (the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, Baluchistan, Bengal, Assam). Anyway, from 1940 onwards, the basic political demand of the Muslim League led by Jinnah was the partition of India.

India and the Second World War: The Second World War began in Europe in September, 1939. Mention has already been made of the resignation of the Congress

Ministries in the different provinces in connection with this war. The Congress declared that it was for the Indian people themselves to decide the question of India's role in war or peace. It was also affirmed that the Congress would not co-operate with any imperialist war. The British Government was pressed to announce clearly : (1) what its war-aims were ; (2) whether India was to be recognised as a free nation after the war ; and (3) whether the initial steps to such freedom were to be taken even when the war was on. There was, however, no sympathetic response from the British Government. A Congress proposal for the formation of a Constituent Assembly to frame India's new constitution did not fare any better. Still, the Congress did not embarrass the British Government by launching any movement ; only 'individual *satyagraha*' was resorted to under Gandhi's directive as a 'moral protest' in support of the claim for freedom of speech.

Early in 1942, Japan's spectacular victories in South-East Asia changed the course of the World War and posed a danger to the British Empire in India. Winston Churchill was the British Prime Minister. He was the leader of the Conservative Party ; as a die-hard Tory he was the last person to concede self-government for India. However, Churchill realised that if Japan invaded India, she could not be successfully defended without the co-operation of the Indian political parties. So a member of his Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps, was sent to India (March, 1942) to hold : discussions with Indian leaders about the plan for a new constitutional arrangement. The plan had three basic features : (1) After the war was over, an elected body was to be formed to frame India's new constitution. (2) Each and every British Indian province was to have the right to reject the new constitution and remain outside the Federation formed under that constitution. (3) A pact was to formulate the future relationship between the Indian Federation and England. Both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected this plan. The Congress demanded, but could not get, immediate transfer of power by the British to an Indian

National Government. The Muslim League demanded, but could not get, an assurance of partition of India. Cripps returned to London empty-handed.

'Quit India' Movement : With the failure of the Cripps Mission, there was an increase of political tension in India. Japan was then just poised for an attack on India's eastern frontier. Gandhi wrote (May, 1942) : 'The presence of the British in India is an invitation to invade India. Their withdrawal removes that bait'. This attitude was the basis of the 'Quit India' movement. On 8 August, 1942, the Congress, led by Gandhi, adopted a resolution which stated that the end of British rule in India was an 'immediate necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations'. A massive non-violent struggle was contemplated. But the very next morning, Gandhi and other top Congress leaders were arrested and stringent repressive measures taken all over India. Lord Linlithgow was the Governor-General. The people, deprived of the guidance of their leaders, resorted to a country-wide violent struggle. Though this movement could not make the British quit India, the very foundation of their rule became totally shaky.

Netaji Subhas : Subhas Chandra Bose, a brilliant student of the Calcutta University, did not join Government service even though successful at the Indian Civil Service Examination in London. Returning to India, he threw himself into the political movement under the leadership of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. He had to pay the price in the form of prolonged spells of imprisonment. He was elected Congress President twice (1938, 1939) ; but his difference with Gandhi and other veteran leaders of the Congress ultimately compelled him to form a new party, the 'Forward Bloc'. In 1941, he left his cal-
 Azad Hind Fouz cutta residence with utmost secrecy and went to Germany. In 1943, he joined hands with Japan and arrived in East Asia (Malaya and Burma) from Europe. There he organised the 'Azad Hind Fouz' (Indian National Army). This army was intended to drive out the British from India through armed confrontation. The Indian personnel of the British army in East

Asia deserted the British in large numbers and joined the Azad Hind Fouz. Rising above all communal pulls, they dedicated themselves to making their country free. The Azad Hind Fouz advanced up to the eastern borders of Assam (1944). After the British victory in Burma, the Fouz disintegrated. On 23 August, 1945, a report was circulated to the effect that Subhas Chandra Bose had been killed in a plane accident. After the end of the war, in 1945-46, some valiant members of the Azad Hind Fouz were court-martialled by the British Government. This was followed by a mutiny in the Indian navy in Bombay.

Independence and Partition of India : In 1945, Lord Wavell, the Governor-General, made efforts to resolve India's political problems. The major Congress leaders, who had been put in prison during the Quit India movement, were released. But primarily through unacceptable demands made by Jinnah, Wavell's plan came to nought.

In the middle of 1955, the Second World War came to an end. General elections held in England resulted in the defeat of Churchill's Conservative Party and the coming to power of the Labour Party, which was somewhat sympathetic to Indian aspirations. Attlee became the new Prime Minister. He initiated a new move to bring about political changes in India.

In March 1946, the Attlee Cabinet sent a Mission comprising three of its members to India. They were Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (who had earlier led a Mission to India in 1942) and A. V. Alexander. Wavell was associated with them. This Mission, after talks with leaders of the different political parties, issued a new plan (16 May 1946): (1) The demand of the Muslim League regarding Pakistan was rejected. (2) The Central Government was to look after some selected subjects (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications); all other subjects were to devolve on the Provincial Governments. (3) The Provincial Governments were to be divided into three 'Groups': (A) six Hindu-majority provinces (Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa); (B) three Muslim-majority provinces (the

Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind) of the north-western zone; (C) two provinces (Bengal and Assam) of the eastern zone. Among the provinces administered by the Chief Commissioners, three (Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg) were to join Group A and one (Baluchistan) was to join Group B. (4) The Provincial Governments were to enjoy the right to self-government in full, subject to the Centre's control over the subjects mentioned above. (5) A Constituent Assembly was to be formed to frame the new Constitution. A complex procedure was to govern the election of members of this Assembly. On the whole, the six provinces of Group A were to be represented by 187 members, the three provinces of Group B by 35 members, the two provinces of Group C by 70 members, the provinces under the Chief Commissioners by 4 members. To them was to be added members, not exceeding 93 in number, representing the Princely States. (6) After the introduction of the new Constitution, British Paramountcy was to lapse and the Princes were freely to decide whether to join the new Indian Federation or remain independent. (7) During the period of Constitution-making, an Interim Government, supported by the major political parties, was to administer India, but the Governor-General would retain his old power of overruling the members.

All the political parties, including the Congress and the Muslim League, accepted the plan. Elections for the Constituent Assembly were held in July, 1946; out of a total of 296 members 211 were Congress supporters. Jinnah was alarmed by this huge majority of the Congress. Under his direction, the Muslim League withdrew its earlier acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and decided to resort to 'direct action' for attainment of Pakistan (July, 1946). On 16 August, 1946, on the 'Direct Action' day of the Muslim League, there was a terrible communal holocaust in Calcutta. On 2 September, 1946, an Interim Government was formed with only Congress nominees; the nominees of the Muslim League joined it on 26 October. Though belonging to

the same Government, the nominees of the Muslim League failed to co-operate with their Congress counterparts in running the administration.

On 9 December, 1946, the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly was held in New Delhi, but the members loyal to the Muslim League did not participate. On 20 February, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee announced, on behalf of the British Government, that by June, 1948, England would give up the responsibility of administering India and transfer power to the Indians. This declaration recognised the possibility of the creation of Pakistan. Lord Wavell was replaced as Governor-General by Lord Mountbatten, who was given the charge of implementing the decision. He arrived in India in March, 1947, and announced a new Plan on 3 June. This provided for partition of India and creation of Pakistan, as demanded by Jinnah; it was also proposed simultaneously to partition three provinces: the Punjab, Bengal and Assam. India, thus truncated, was to be given full independence; the Indian Princes would be free to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent. The Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs accepted the Plan. Gandhi, though not agreeable to the proposal for the vivisection of India, did not disown the stand of the Congress leaders.

The Mountbatten Plan having been accepted by the principal political parties, the British Government proceeded to translate it into action. In July, 1947, the British Parliament passed the 'Indian Independence Act'. This Act provided for termination of British rule and partition of India. The Punjab and Bengal were divided between India and Pakistan in accordance with the decisions of the Legislatures of the two provinces. A part of the district of Sylhet in Assam and the whole of the North-West Frontier Province were included in Pakistan as the result of plebiscite. A Boundary Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe demarcated the boundaries between new India and Pakistan.

CHAPTER XI

CONSOLIDATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Making of the new Constitution : The first sitting of the Constituent Assembly which had been formed in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Plan was held on 9 December, 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the veteran Congress leader, was elected its President. The Muslim League did not take part in this sitting. A proposal about the basic objectives of the proposed Constitution, the 'Objectives Resolution', was moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. On 22 January, 1947, this was accepted unanimously. India was to be a 'Sovereign Democratic Republic'—this basic objective was embodied in the resolution. Later, this resolution formed the basis of the Preamble to the Constitution of India.

The opposition of the Muslim League made the future of the Cabinet Mission Plan uncertain; the British Government, conceding Jinnah's demands, prepared to partition India and ultimately the Mountbatten Plan resolved crisis in a different way. For all these reasons, the Constituent Assembly could not properly settle down to its business till the final transfer of power on 15 August, 1947. After independence, the Constituent Assembly was transformed into a sovereign body and the conditions which the Cabinet Mission Plan had stipulated for constitution-making were no longer valid. These conditions had been imposed with an eye to the demands of the Muslim League, but in the changed context after the partition of India these no longer had any relevance.

A few days after independence, the Constituent Assembly entrusted a Committee (with Bhimrao Ramrao Ambedkar as Chairman) to prepare a draft Constitution. Ambedkar was a legal luminary and a prominent leader of scheduled-caste Hindus. In February, 1948, the draft was placed before the Constituent Assembly. After detailed discussions on the basis of the draft,

the Constituent Assembly gave it final shape on 26 November, 1949. The new Constitution was made effective on 26 January, 1950.

From 15 August, 1947, to 25 January, 1950, India was linked with England as a 'Dominion'. From the day on which the Constitution came into force (26 January, 1950), India became a separate, independent 'Democratic Republic'. However, even then India remained a member of the (British) 'Commonwealth of Nations'. This implied no subordination to the British Parliament or allegiance to the British Sovereign who was, however, recognised as 'Head of the Commonwealth'.

Special features of the Constitution : The Constitution of India is remarkable in many respects among those of the world's democracies. This vast land-mass is the abode of people with diverse religions and a rich variety of languages. The Indian democratic system has recognised the equal rights of each and every one of them in the political and economic spheres. Every citizen is given the opportunity to enjoy these rights through legal and administrative measures. As some sections of the people have remained backward educationally, culturally and economically due to historical reasons, special measures have been ensured for their all-round betterment ; in order that they may progress rapidly and catch up with others more fortunate, they have been given special rights in certain respects.

Equal rights

India is a secular State, *i.e.*, there is no State religion, and no religion is accorded any particular favour.

The State is strictly neutral in respect of all religions and their followers. Here every citizen can practise religion according to his own faith as well as family and social traditions.

Secularism

The Constitution has given each citizen certain Fundamental Rights : right to equality ; right to freedom, *i.e.*, right to express one's opinions freely, protection of life and personal liberty, etc. ; right against exploitation ; freedom of religion ; educational

and cultural rights. Any infringement of the Fundamental Rights of any citizen by the State, by any organisation or by any individual, is justiciable (Right to Constitutional Remedies). These rights have been ensured so that every citizen can develop his personality fully. These provisions of the Indian Constitution do not compare unfavourably with those of the American Constitution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen issued at the time of the French Revolution.

The State can put curbs on an individual citizen's Fundamental Rights in the large interests of the society as a whole. If individual rights stand in the way of the collective good, then such curbs are essential; otherwise, the nation's progress is disrupted, India is a Welfare State. The preamble to the Constitution has stated that 'Justice—social, political and economic' has to be ensured. It is precisely to ensure such justice that the Fundamental Rights of an individual citizen may have to be curtailed in certain instances.

The right to equality is a Fundamental Right; it has ensured social justice. The Constitution has provided for eradication of untouchability. The basis of political rights is adult franchise. Any citizen, irrespective of race and religion, can occupy even the highest posts at any level including that of the President and the Prime Minister. To ensure economic justice, the Constitution has laid down in a separate chapter the 'Directive Principles of State Policy'.

Integration of Princely States: In terms of the Cabinet Mission Plan, the Mountbatten Plan and the Indian Independence Act, the Princes had two ways open to them in 1947. They could opt for independence or join any of the two newly-formed Dominions (India, Pakistan). But in the context of the actual political reality, they could not possibly choose independence. The Congress did not recognise the right of any Indian Princely State to be an independent and separate entity away from the mainstream of national life. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel called upon the Indian Princes on behalf of the Congress to join the

new Indian State. By 15 August, 1947, excepting Kashmir, Junagadh and Hyderabad, all other Princely States within the geographical boundary of India joined the Indian Union.

When in October, 1947, Pakistan invaded Kashmir, the Maharaja of the State joined India. This accession was opposed by Pakistan. The issue was later raised in the United Nations, but it has not so far found any solution acceptable to India and Pakistan. However, Kashmir remains legally and politically an inalienable part of India. Though the Nawab of Junagadh tried to join Pakistan, the State became a part of India due to the efforts of its people. As the Nizam of Hyderabad was unwilling to join India and as internal troubles flared up in his State, the Indian Army launched a 'military action' there in June, 1948. Later (November, 1949), the Nizam joined India.

In the early stages, the accession of the Princely States was limited to three subjects : foreign affairs, defence and communications. In other matters, the Princes were free. But within a short period it was apparent that full integration was essential in the interest of the people of these States. It was imperative that the former Indian provinces and the former Princely States should come under the same constitutional framework. Sardar Patel persuaded the Princes to give up their rights in the matter of internal administration. This made it possible for the States to fully integrate with India.

While putting the Constitution into effect in 1950, the former Princely States were treated as a special category (Part B States). Later, the Constitution was amended to put an end to such separate treatment. At present, only Kashmir enjoys some special rights. Secondly, for administrative convenience, some States were brought together in a single unit in certain cases (for example, Rajasthan). In certain other cases, one or more States were integrated with former British Indian provinces (for example, the Punjab). In still other cases, on single State was split up and integrated with different former British provinces (for example, Hyderabad).

MODEL QUESTIONS

(A) Essay-type Questions

Chapter I

1. Indicate the causes of the fall of the Mughal Empire.
2. Discuss the causes of Siraj-ud-daula's conflict with the English. What were the results of the battle of Plassey?
3. Trace the history of the growth of the East India Company's power from the battle of Plassey to that of Buxar.
4. What is meant by *Dewani* and *Nizamat*? Why did Clive assume the *Dewani*? What were the results of the system of Double Government?
5. Attempt a sketch of the Famine of 1770.

Chapter II

1. Describe the changes in district administration from the time of Warren Hastings to that of Bentinck.
2. Discuss the administrative, judicial and revenue reforms of Lord Cornwallis.
3. Discuss the origin and development of the Company's Civil Service.
4. What were the arrangements for the training of the Company's 'Writers' at the Fort William and Haileybury Colleges?
5. Discuss the problems relating to the appointment of Indians to high posts during the Company's regime.

Chapter III

1. Discuss the extension of urban life and the origin of the middle class under the Company.

2. How was Western education spread through the medium of the English language ?

3. What problems were created for the Bengali society by the propagation of Christianity and the spread of Western education ?

4. Discuss the religious and social reforms undertaken during the Company's rule and analyse the role of the Brahmo movement.

5. Describe the development of Bengali literature during the first half of the nineteenth century.

6. Comment briefly on : (a) The formative phase of Indian newspapers ; (b) Improvements in the communication system.

7. Discuss the inception of political consciousness and establishment of political societies before the birth of the Congress.

Chapter IV

1. Narrate the history of the independent Mysore Kingdom. How did Mysore lose its independence ?

2. Discuss the different stages of the fall of the Maratha Empire.

3. Describe the causes and effects of Nepal's war with the Company.

4. Give a brief account of the different stages of the British conquest of Burma.

5. Describe the rise and fall of the Sikh Kingdom.

6. Describe the life and activities of Ranjit Singh.

7. How was Sind brought under British rule ?

8. Describe Dalhousie's annexation of territories through diverse means.

9. How did the Company's sovereign power over the Indian States extend from the time of Wellesley to that of Dalhousie ? What were its effects on the Indian States ?

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Chapter V

1. Give a brief account of the Wahabi movement.
2. What do you know about the Faraizi movement?
3. Describe the causes of the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.
4. Why did the 'Sepoy Mutiny' fail? What were its direct effects?
5. Was 'Sepoy Mutiny' a national movement or a war of independence?

Chapter VI

1. Discuss the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1858.
2. Describe the evolution of the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils from 1861 to 1919. How far were the political rights of the Indians extended during this period through various Acts?
3. Explain the significance of the Morley-Minto Reforms.
4. Discuss the main provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919.
5. How far were the rights of the Indian's relating to local self-government extended during the 19th century?
6. Describe the 'movement relating to the appointment of Indians to the Indian Civil Service.
7. Discuss the special features of the economic history of India in the second half of the nineteenth century.
8. How did the nationalist leaders criticise British rule for India's poverty?
9. Write a note on the nationalist demand for appointment of Indians to the Indian Civil Service.

Chapter VII

1. Narrate the causes and effects of the British wars with the Afghans.
2. Describe the annexation of Burma by the British.

3. What policy was pursued by Curzon in relation to Tibet ?

Chapter VIII

1. Describe the spread of education, with particular reference to higher education, in the second half of the 19th century.
2. Discuss Sir Syed Ahmad's views regarding the education and politics of the Muslim community.
3. Describe the objectives and programme of the Aligarh movement.
4. Discuss the influence of nationalism in Bengali literature from Bankim Chandra to Rabindranath.
5. How far did the spread of newspapers and public opinion exercise influence in the political sphere in the second half of the nineteenth century ?
6. Narrate the history of religious movements in the second half of the 19th century.
7. Discuss the origin of militant nationalism.

Chapter IX

1. What was Curzon's aim in the matter of the partition of Bengal ? What were its political effects ? Why was the Partition of Bengal undone ?
2. Describe the causes and results of the Swadeshi movement. What is its significance in the national movement of India ?
3. What is Separate Electorate ? How did it originate ? What is its political significance ?

...

Chapter X

1. Discuss the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom movement.
2. Describe the causes and effects of the Non co-operation movement, the Khilafat movement and the Civil Disobedience movement.

3. Discuss the objectives and methods of the terrorist movement.

4. Describe the relations of the 'peasants' and 'workers' movements with the freedom movement.

5. Give a brief account of the Government of India Act, 1935. Explain its major defects from the point of view of the nationalists.

6. Discuss the growth of communalism and the implications of the Pakistan Resolution.

7. How did the Second World War influence Indian politics ?

8. How did the British Government try to resolve Indian political problems during the period from 1942 to 1946 ? Why did the moves fail ?

9. How did Subhas Chandra Bose and the Azad Hind Fauz fight for India's freedom ?

10. Give an account of the Partition of India and the advent of freedom.

...

Chapter XI

1. Give an account of the making of the Indian Constitution.

2. How were the Princely States integrated with the Dominion of India ?

(B) Short Questions

Chapter I

1. How did Mir Jafar become Nawab of Bengal ?

2. What were the causes of the Famine of 1770 ?

Chapter II

1. Why was the Fort William College founded ? Who was the founder ?

2. Why were the Indians denied appointments to high posts during the Company's rule?

Chapter III

1. Why did the Bengalis take to Western education with so much interest?
2. What do you know about 'Young Bengal'?

Chapter IV

1. Why did Peshwa Baji Rao II make the treaty of Bassein with the Company? What were its results?
2. What is meant by the Company's 'Paramountcy' over the Princely States of India?

Chapter V

1. Why were the Wahabis opposed to British rule?
2. Can the Sepoy Mutiny be described as India's First War of Independence?

Chapter VI

1. What were the changes in the position of the Indian Princes after the end of the Company's rule in India?
2. How far was British rule responsible for India's poverty?

Chapter VII

1. What were the gains or losses of the British in their wars with Afghanistan?
2. What was the policy of the British in respect of the north-western frontier?

Chapter VIII

1. What does the 'two-nation theory' signify? Did Sir Syed Ahmad introduce it?
2. What is 'militant nationalism'?

Chapter IX

1. Analyse the causes of Lord Curzon's animus towards the Bengalis and Marathas.
2. What did Lord Minto promise to the Muslims?

Chapter X

1. How did Mahatma Gandhi attract the peasantry to the freedom movement through satyagraha?
2. Why did the Congress Ministries resign when the Second World War began?

Chapter XI

1. What do you know about the Constituent Assembly?
2. How were Kashmir and Hyderabad integrated with India?

(C) Objective Questions

The purpose of this type of questions is to ascertain whether the examinee has exact knowledge about any particular aspect of an historical event. For Example: (1) On which date did the battle of Plassey occur? (2) Who won the battle of Buxar? (3) Who was the Governor-General of India at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny? (4) On which date was the Calcutta University founded? (5) What was the name of the Governor-General responsible for the Partition of Bengal? (6) In which city was the Pakistan Resolution adopted? (7) Who was Cripps? (8) On which date did the Constituent Assembly first meet? (9) Did Mahatma Gandhi approve of the partition of India? (10) On which date did the Constitution come into force? (11) Which former Princely State now enjoys special privileges under the Constitution?

The answer to this type of questions has to be given with only a name or a date (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11), or with simple 'Yes' or 'No' (Question 9), or with very brief descriptive matter (Question 7).



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